

NAVY NEWS

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A ROYAL MARINE of 40 Commando looks along the line in the grass-covered dunes of Saunton Sands as HMS Illustrious carries out a series of amphibious exercises in the Bristol Channel. Lusty is now the nation's on-call helicopter carrier after completing six months of intensive training. See the centre pages for details.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon, HMS Illustrious



BAND ON THE GUN

**MUSICIANS
TRAIN AT
LYMPSTONE**

CAREY ON JACK

**OCEAN'S
VIDEO
WOWS
DIVA**

TURF WARS



Satellite imagery courtesy of NASA

Fleet Focus

Protecting our nation's interests

IT was another month of homecomings as 2011 drew to a close – with one ship in particular basking in the warm glow of media stardom.

HMS Ocean was the darling of the Internet and news channels when their version of Mariah Carey's *All I Want For Christmas Is You* caught the public eye – as well as winning the endorsement of the singer herself.

Devonport welcomed the Mighty O, Portsmouth greeted destroyer **HMS Edinburgh** (from the South Atlantic) and frigate **HMS St Albans** (patrolling the Gulf), Faslane was the destination for **HMS Bangor** (Operation Ellamy off Libya) and **St Albans' Merlin flight 829 Naval Air Squadron** winged their way back to Culdrose (see pages 4-5).

Meanwhile one ship was heading out of port – ice patrol vessel **HMS Protector** left Portsmouth for her maiden voyage to Antarctica, though the sea gods were not kind to her as she made her way to Plymouth in a Force 8 gale to pick up equipment (see page 3). She is also our ship of the month (see page 12).

One ship still on station is **RFA Fort Victoria**, which had another encounter with pirates in the Somali Basin (see right).

Aircraft carrier **HMS Illustrious** proved her worth in her new role of commando carrier when she passed her Operational Sea Training test, and we joined her when she put a force of green berets from **40 Commando RM** ashore in North Devon (see pages 24-25).

And talking of Royal Marines, the new recruits to the RM Band Service don't just play a mean tune – they also play their part at the sharp end of Corps activities, for which they undergo military training (see pages 14-15).

With Merlin Mk 2 in the offing, **824 Naval Air Squadron** at Culdrose is gearing up to train the men and women who will fly, fight and maintain the new version of the helicopter (see pages 20-21).

The Royal Navy's newest submarine, **HMS Astute**, was the centre of attention at Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia when the attack boat called in after the successful missile tests we reported last month (see page 7).

Type 23 frigate **HMS Iron Duke** has been sailing in some tricky waters round the UK coast – all the better to train the Royal Navy's next tranche of specialist navigators (see page 8).

And while she was edging carefully through narrows and round shoals, the team at **Craft Trials Wing of 11 (Amphibious Trials and Training) Squadron** at RM Instow have been charging around the Bristol Channel at 40kts, testing the capabilities of the Swedish Combat Boat 90 (see page 22).

Minehunter **HMS Shoreham** has been visiting her namesake town on the Sussex coast, and her Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Sarah West, is also making the news – she is to be the first woman at the helm of a major Royal Navy warship when she moves on to **HMS Portland** (see page 10).

And research by scientists has cleared the way for women to serve on board **Royal Navy submarines** (also on page 10).

HMS Echo has been given a clean bill of health in her MOT, allowing her to carry on sounding the waters of the Middle East (see page 6).

HMS Kent took a step back to operational readiness by sailing from Rosyth following a year-long refit (see page 10).

And the 2010 Firmin Sword of Peace has been awarded to **RFA Largs Bay** for her humanitarian efforts following the earthquake in Haiti – though the ship herself now sails under the Australian flag as **HMAS Choules** (see page 6).

Sniper ends pirates' dash

ROYAL Marines pore over a suspected pirate launch crammed with fuel drums at the end of a dramatic sea and helicopter chase in the Indian Ocean.

One mother ship, two skiffs and seven suspected pirates were snared by British naval forces in the latest blow dealt to the freebooters.

A commando sniper was forced to fire warning shots from the back of a Lynx to bring one fast skiff to a halt as it tried to flee from the clutches of a dedicated anti-piracy force aboard RFA Fort Victoria.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary picked up a report that a Spanish fishing boat had come under attack from a pirate action group around 480 miles from the Seychelles and 400 miles off the coast of Somalia.

The ship's Lynx was immediately scrambled and hastened to the scene, where it found a whaler and skiff in the vicinity of the fishing vessel.

The skiff chose to flee the scene, racing away at 25kts, with the Lynx – the world's fastest helicopter – giving chase.

The boat's crew ignored all calls from

the Lynx crew to stop, so a specially-trained commando sniper fired warning shots ahead of the fleeing vessel, finally bringing it to a stop.

Its crew were subsequently arrested and taken by boat to Fort Victoria, which is operating as part of NATO's counter piracy Combined Task Force 508.

Fort Victoria's Royal Marines boarding team then focused their attention on the whaler and another skiff nearby.

As a result of the day's action, seven suspected pirates were detained aboard Fort Vic – as was their whaler as evidence.

"We could see the fishing vessel was clearly in trouble, and our actions were decisive in disrupting the pirates from further attacks on the fishermen," said Lt Alastair 'AJ' Thompson, the Lynx Flight Commander aboard Fort Victoria.

"This operation was superbly well co-ordinated."

It's another success for the combined Royal Navy-Royal Marines-Fleet Air Arm-Royal Fleet Auxiliary force on the support ship; earlier in the autumn it freed the crew of the MV Montecristo attacked by pirates

– then captured a mother ship suspected to be behind the attack on the Italian merchantman.

The prisoners were handed over to authorities in the Seychelles – the first time this has occurred under an agreement between the UK and islands signed in 2009.

"It's been a long, but rewarding operation with many complex aspects," said Capt Gerry Northwood, in charge of the Royal Navy's counter-piracy mission on Fort Victoria.

The latest success by the force he leads was praised by Defence Secretary Philip Hammond.

"British Forces are in the forefront in the fight against piracy," he said. "The resolute contribution of the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary, operating as part of an international coalition, is keeping up the pressure."

"This latest operation demonstrates again the vital work we are undertaking to tackle piracy that threatens international shipping lanes."

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins (FRPU East)





● The ship's firefighters work their way through the smoke at OST; who left the tap running?... S/Lt Trudgeon conducts a survey from the James Caird IV off Plymouth; and a BV tracked vehicle is craned aboard Protector

THE ICE MAIDEN (VOYAGE)

DID you hear the one about the icebreaker which had never broken ice?

Well, you have now. In a decade's service as a civilian vessel, MV Polarbjørn never did the job intended for her.

She did a lot of work supporting oil rigs, spent long periods in the Caribbean.

But sailing close to swathes of ice, negotiating icebergs, growlers, bergy bits, patrolling in the domain of penguins and leopard seals, not a bit of it.

It's taken a change of name – to HMS Protector – and crew for that.

In the deepening gloom of a late November day (hence the rather grainy image below), the newest ship in the Royal Navy sailed on her maiden voyage.

Protector left Portsmouth Harbour to a ripple of camera flashes on the Round Tower as dusk descended on the Solent.

Over the coming three months – the first half of an eight-month maiden deployment – the Royal Navy's new Antarctic patrol ship will see a lot of ice.

Luckily, there's a fine pedigree. Protector is built by the same firm as the ship she replaces, HMS Endurance. (Indeed the hull is pretty much identical to the much-loved Red Plum.)

And there's quite a bit of ice patrol experience to call on in the Royal Navy. This is, after all, the 100th anniversary year of Scott's Terra Nova expedition.

For Protector, like Scott, science is the essence of this mission: supporting the British Antarctic Survey experts on the ice and gathering unparalleled data about waters only inadequately charted to date.

Unparalleled? Well, her multi-beam echo sounder is the next generation along from the survey kit Endurance enjoyed. A one-

second sweep by that sounder will pick up 132 readings. When her mission is complete she'll hand over hard drives to the UK Hydrographic Office in Taunton with terabytes of data (one terabyte would fill 212 DVDs...).

And the reason why? Well, Antarctica is proving increasingly popular with cruise ships, eager to take tourists (upwards of 8,000 annually now) to the ends of the earth for the ultimate experience. They want to get as close to the ice as is safe... and for that you need top-notch charts.

Hence you send a top-notch survey ship to the Antarctic Peninsula, the slice of the frozen continent for which the UK acts as 'caretaker'.

Despite the fact that a vessel has gone to survey these waters pretty much every year for the past half century (among them the previous HMS Protector...), "only a minuscule amount has been surveyed to modern standards", says Lt Cdr Philip Payne, Protector's First Lieutenant.

Among the most popular destinations is Deception Island. It's on Protector's work list. So too Elephant Island.

Further along the peninsula the waters around lesser-known Dundee and Dettale Islands and Andvord Bay will be surveyed.

First, of course, you have to get there. The first of Protector's three work periods begins in mid-January. At ten knots, it's the end of December before she gets to the South Atlantic, a fortnight after that before she's among the ice.

She'll have to negotiate the Drake Passage six times this deployment; it's a three-day passage between the tip of South America and the Antarctic Peninsula and the waters are rarely forgiving.

That's why most ships take the natural canals of Patagonia

passing from the Atlantic to the Pacific... but that's not an option for Protector.

Nor is it good for her. "She rolls like a pig," Lt Cdr Payne says dolefully. To prove the point, a Force 8 barrels through the English Channel on the very first night of the deployment; aboard it's like riding on a seesaw that is not only pitching violently, but yawing as well.

Sailors are, of course, used to storms. They are less *au fait* with working in extreme temperatures, particularly the cold.

The average temperature Protector can expect around the ice is -2°C. Typical lows will be -10° to -15°. Throw in the wind chill (the wind in these parts is largely uninhibited, so the gusts are ferocious) and it's pretty unpleasant.

A Royal Marine mountain leader – plus a small detachment of green berets – joins the survey ship once she's in the South Atlantic specifically as an expert on living and working in frozen climes.

Like Protector herself, most of the ship's company are ice virgins (including her commanding officer) – a handful have served aboard Endurance, a few such as AB(HM) Mike Beevers sailed with HMS Scott to Antarctic when she filled in for the Red Plum.

Going south with Protector, he says, is a "completely different experience".

He continued: "It has been challenging getting her ready for this deployment, but it should be worth it."

"We've been working since April for this moment so there's a sense of excitement aboard."

"The sights on the ice are incredible, amazing. It's a different world from anywhere

else. Not much of the sea has been charted and on Scott last year it was fascinating to find a volcano like Deception Island but under water."

He's part of an 18-strong hydrographic and survey department aboard Protector, assisted by a state-of-the-art multi-beam echo sounder which, like the rest of the surveying equipment, was fitted over the summer.

In addition, Protector's brand new survey motor launch is crammed with hi-tech kit – the only difference is that, thanks to its size, it can go where mother cannot.

Together, they provide data for the UK Hydrographic Office which would have been undreamed of just a few years ago; during a recent survey of the River Dart it could pick out the marks on the seabed left by anchors dragging along...

...which is something you're not likely to find around Antarctica.

What you will find is a geologist's/hydrographer's/environmentalist's dream: "Very few places are dull and uninteresting on the sea bed," says Lt Cdr Payne, who spent eight years involved with Endurance, including planning much of her deployments, but never actually went down south.

"There's some fascinating geology, a lot of things occurring with ice floes. And some of the places have never been done before. To get the full picture, will be fascinating."

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime deployment for most of us."

Some of his shipmates are slightly more reticent.

"Last year I was doing counter-piracy, now I'm down on the ice," says LS(AWW) Jamie Gallienne who's not quite adjusted to life aboard a survey ship after serving in sleek grey messengers of death.

"It's definitely more relaxed – there's no operations room, no missiles, a different way of working."

"The accommodation is quite luxurious – I was used to a 52-man mess."

On here, as a junior rate, he'll have to 'make do' with a three-man berth. With ten-channel satellite TV.

"You get your own space, that's something you don't get on a pusser's grey."

It's not the only thing different from the rest of the fleet. The bridge (which offers 360° visibility plus a small coffee area, nicknamed the Bridge Bistro) also serves as the ops room. Containers in the hold serve as the comms centre, armoury, buffer's shack, photographer's studio.

The two-deck hold also stores something Endurance couldn't: Royal Marines BV tracked vehicles and quad bikes with trailers.

With Protector lacking helicopters (she has a flight deck but there's no hangar and you can't lash aircraft down, so it's really only for emergencies), the BVs and bikes will be used instead to ferry supplies to outlying British Antarctic Survey bases. A powerful crane (in theory it could lift three small landing craft) hauls them out of the hold and on to the ice.

This combination of practicality and hi-tech survey equipment means, believes her Commanding Officer Capt Peter Sparkes, that Protector will "serve us well down in the ice".

As a teenager he was fired up by the old Endurance's deeds around South Georgia 30 years ago.

Three decades on he gets the chance to follow in her footsteps.

"Driving Protector is a unique privilege," he says. "This is a very special command: a fantastic ship with a fantastic ship's company."

The latter have spent the past six or so months 'navalising' the ship, turning her from MV Polarbjørn into HMS Protector.

"They've had to transform her into a warship in a few months and it's been a big ask, but for most of us this is the chance of a lifetime."

Although 90 per cent of the ship is pretty much as the Navy got it, fitting that final ten per cent of Royal Navy equipment – such as communications, the WECDIS electronic chart kit, and the specialist surveying equipment – has placed great demands on his men and women.

They number 88 on paper, but you will never find more than 65 on board. As the ship deployed, it was a little over 50.

Crew rotation means around one third of the sailors will be in the UK at any one time – Protector should be available for operations 330 days a year; when her Antarctic duties are done, she could be sent to the Caribbean or survey UK waters.

Crew rotation also means that you won't see many sailors as you move around the wide passageways and stairs – and that the demands placed on the small number of souls aboard are many.

"We are lean manned and we ask a great deal of those aboard," Capt Sparkes adds. "It's high-tempo work in the most demanding environment in the world."



● Hello, Mighty O... A tug assists Britain's biggest warship into Plymouth and (below) never mind that he's wearing a goon suit, all that matters is: dad's back... a warm reception for 01 Flight, 829 NAS, at Culdrose

Pictures: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow, RNAS Culdrose and LA(Phot) Rob Gillies, FRPU West



● Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar thanks the men and women of HMS Ocean for all they have done and (below) a low-key, understated welcome for one HMS Edinburgh rating

Pictures: LA(Phot) Guy Pool, HMS Ocean, and Jason Ballard, FRPU East



● HMS St Albans' AB Aaron Stoker kisses Hannah Reeson – who's just accepted his proposal, hence the sparkler... and (right) senior rates aboard HMS Ocean show their delight at returning home after 225 days away

Pictures: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan, FRPU East, and Martin Carney, HMS Bulwark



Early Christmas

MONDAY October 31 2011.

Officially, that's the date when operations in Libya came to an end.

But war isn't truly over until everyone is home.

No, the date to mark in the diary is Friday December 9 2011.

That's when Operation Ellamy, codename for the British effort in Libya, really ended.

For that was the day the very last ship of 16 Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels committed to the operation finally came home: HMS Ocean.

Britain's biggest warship played a key role in toppling the Gaddafi regime.

Forty-nine times her Apache gunships struck a dagger into the belly of the beast – and 49 times the Army Air Corps helicopters returned safely to mother.

But that was a good two months earlier – since when the Mighty O had rather dropped off the radar.

So her homecoming on a brilliant winter's morn would have been a relatively low-key affair, save for the 1,000 or so loved ones waiting expectantly on the jetty, a Royal Marines Band, some senior officers and a few local media.

But that was before one video captured the Zeitgeist perfectly... and the world went a bit mad.

[Beginning of international media frenzy.]

There had been a distinct possibility that the helicopter assault ship might not return to Devonport for Christmas.

So when the ship's company were told they would be back for the big day, the aviation department decided to mark the occasion with a spoof video.

What better than a 're-imagining' of Mariah Carey's *All I Want For Christmas Is You* featuring lots of naval tomfoolery... and a sailor serving champers to a marine in the captain's bath?

One week and more than one million hits on the internet video site Youtube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDZcGz4vmJc>) later and pretty much the entire globe knew of HMS Ocean – helped in no small part by the diva herself, who 'tweeted' her

approval: *This is the best thing I've ever seen, you guys just made my day.*

Her endorsement sealed it; the video promptly featured on the Beeb. And ITV. And BFBS. And ABC (the American and Australian broadcasters).

In fact, the only people who hadn't latched on to the worldwide sensation were the crew of the Mighty O themselves; it was only once they were within mobile phone reception range that the sailors realised they were internationally famous.

"It has been crazy. I don't think they have really grasped how internationally famous they have become," said Lt Kelly Cleeve, one of the brains behind the spoof.

"They have said they are ready to do the *X-Factor* final if required."

[End of international media frenzy.]

There are two people in PO Stephen Cottam's life who already possess the X-Factor: his fiancée Sasha – also a petty officer – and the couple's first child, five-week-old daughter Freya.

"It is the best thing in life to have your first child, but it is the worst thing when you are forced to be parted from them," said Stephen, one of Ocean's landing craft maintainers.

"I was lucky enough to be allowed home from deployment to see Freya being born. It was the most amazing experience. But it was a real emotional wrench to be torn away again with her so young. But it is so fantastic to hold her again – I can't let go of her."

"Christmas is going to be the best ever. She is the only Christmas present I could ever want from my fiancée."

His fiancée added: "I am so pleased Stephen is back. It has been a long time, much longer than expected. But it makes it even more special being so much nearer Christmas. Stephen has missed a large proportion of her life with Freya being so young."

Waiting for LAH Ashley Mugford was not one but two new arrivals: daughters Eva and Mya, aged 15 weeks. He was at the side

of his partner Lauren Seymour for the birth before flying back to rejoin the Mighty O.

"It isn't often you can make children's wishes come true and I can do that this Christmas. Ashley's arrival back home is the perfect end to a great year," said an overjoyed Lauren.

When not producing babies and spoof videos, the men and women on the helicopter assault ship were, of course, rather busy with the task in hand.

The ship originally left Devonport back in April intending to be away for just a few weeks.

But as the situation in Libya worsened, Ocean broke away from the force and joined the UN-backed mission to protect Libyan civilians.

The net result: 99 missions flown by 'eye-in-the-sky' Sea Kings of 857 NAS to pave the way for those 49 Apache strikes to knock out military vehicles, installations and communications equipment, 225 days away from home (176 of them at sea), 40,000 more miles on the odometer and one tryant toppled.

All of which has demanded tremendous effort from the ship's company and embarked air group, and considerable support and forbearance from families – as the Mighty O's Commanding Officer Capt Andrew Betton acknowledged.

"I have been hugely impressed by the fortitude and professional attitude of my ship's company. Despite the frequent changes in our programme and the uncertainty of when our mission would end, everyone has got stuck in to do what the Royal Navy does best with good humour, energy and professionalism."

"After the uncertainty in our programme, we are all delighted to be back home for Christmas. Our families and friends have been a huge support during this deployment and it's wonderful to be home with them for this most special of family occasions, particularly for those of us with small children."

REWIND a fortnight, head 400 miles north, throw in some customary Faslane weather (ie

rain) and the penultimate ship to return from the Libyan mission, HMS Bangor, came home.

There was no global media frenzy surrounding the minehunter's return, no 1,000 people waiting on the jetty. But there were babies. There are *always* babies.

The last time CPO Grant Wilson saw his daughter "she was just tiny" – Charlotte was born just before the Sandown-class ship deployed to the Mediterranean.

Seven months later, little Charlotte was "more baby-like"; she was also "full of smiles and joy". As was dad.

"It's absolutely fantastic to be back – just brilliant," he beamed.

"The time passed quite quickly because we were really busy. I think it was harder on the families back here."

Those were sentiments shared by his shipmate, LS Dawn Laughlan. During the most demanding moments of the deployment, she was working 18 or 20-hour days. "That was good because there was never a dull moment," she added.

Indeed, Bangor did what she was built for: finding and blowing up mines. She disposed of one 2,400lb mine off the port of Tobruk, then blew up a torpedo found lying on the seabed; both were sent to oblivion courtesy of her Seafox underwater drone.

Those actions were the high point of more than 120 days at sea – 37 of them within range of the weapons of pro-Gaddafi forces ashore.

Despite such dangers and the punishing Mediterranean heat, not a single day was lost to defects or breakdowns throughout.

For those reasons and many more, Bangor's CO Lt Cdr Neil Marriott said his ship's company "should be rightly proud".

His boss, Cdr David Bence, Commanding Officer of the First Mine Countermeasures Squadron based at Clyde went even further.

Bangor's contribution to the Libya mission, he said, "has been outstanding and has been far in excess of expectations."

"HMS Bangor's ship's company epitomise everything that is great about our men and woman, from their stoic response



s presence

to her short notice activation to the professional and flexible manner in which they conducted operations; the country, the RN and their families should be proud."

NOW, if you could encapsulate 'Christmas coming early' in photographic form, then a passionate kiss is a very good place to start.

AB Aaron Stoker and Hannah Reeson obliged as HMS St Albans completed six months in the Gulf.

And just a few yards along Fountain Lake Jetty in Portsmouth there were similar scenes as the 240 men and women of HMS Edinburgh returned home – in their case from six months in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

The two warships returned to the Solent one after the other on a clear, crisp December morn. They found 600 family members and friends waiting for them (and there were quite a few more on Round Tower).

Above the tumult of cheers, they might have heard the skirl of bagpipes; in celebration of her Scottish heritage, two pipers stood on Edinburgh's bridge roof to serenade the ship into harbour.

For The Saint temperatures in Portsmouth – a mere 5°C – were a bit of a shock to the system; not that long ago she was enjoying the sights of Aqaba in Jordan, the pyramids outside Cairo and, most recently, Grand Harbour in Malta.

The core of her six months away were focused in the Gulf – although she hit the headlines before she got to her operational area; the ship's Merlin saved all 13 crew of the tanker Pavit as the vessel threatened to sink in the Arabian Sea.

Thirteen times aircrewman PO Mike 'H' Henson was winched down on to the deck of the stricken vessel to collect a crew member. And 13 times he lifted them up into the safety of the helicopter, a deed worthy of nomination for a 'Millie' award by the Sun newspaper; the winners were being announced just after we went to press.

'H' and his comrades in 01 Flight, 829 Naval Air Squadron, returned home to RNAS Culdrose 24 hours before the frigate herself

sailed into Portsmouth Harbour.

Working in harsh conditions with temperatures rising as high as 50°C, the fliers took part in anti-piracy and anti-terrorism patrols.

The helicopter and ship also joined in numerous multi-national exercises (including working with two US Navy carriers) to strengthen ties with Gulf states and to protect British interests in the region – invaluable to the nation's commerce.

"The ship has been quietly operating in the Gulf area, reassuring, deterring, exercising and generally doing all the diplomacy activities that the RN has contributed to the region for many years," said the frigate's Commanding Officer Cdr Tom Sharpe.

"However, maintaining the focus and skills required to swing immediately to the other end of the scale was the challenge and I am proud of the way my ship's company achieved this through the heat of the Arabian summer. In sum, we did the blockades, and whilst there was no Trafalgar on completion, we were ready."

It was a deployment which, St Albans' Commanding Officer conceded, "lacked glamour"... but luckily that was provided when his ship came alongside.

With the gangway across AB Stoker (sadly not an advocate of nominative determinism, as he's actually a seaman specialist) rushed ashore and promptly got down on one knee and proposed to his girlfriend Hannah (who said 'yes').

Keith and Primrose Wright from Wiltshire found themselves torn between the two simultaneous homecomings.

Aboard the Saint was WO1 Duncan Wright, the couple's son – and the ship's executive warrant officer.

And a few yards away aboard HMS Edinburgh was Lt Helen Wright, the couple's daughter-in-law... and deputy logistics officer on the Fortress of the Sea.

Both sailed at the end of May and both were met by a sizeable family turnout (two sets

of parents, two partners and five children – although two of the latter, Lois and Jordan, sailed in with dad aboard St Albans, having joined the frigate the night before off Plymouth).

While the Saint roared east of Suez, Edinburgh was rather more used to the chilly temperatures; the bulk of her time away came in the South Atlantic, including a visit to the snowy paradise of South Georgia.

She also crossed into the Pacific, via the natural canals of Patagonia and then back across the Americas courtesy of the world's greatest man-made waterway, the Panama Canal.

The lowest temperature recorded by the ship's company of the Fortress of the Sea was -19°C – although things did warm up latterly; the final stage of her deployment saw her support the international fight against the narcotics trade in the Caribbean.

In short, the Type 42 destroyer had left a footprint on four continents since departing Portsmouth, said her CO Cdr Paul Russell.

He added: "From defence diplomacy along the West African coast to exercises in the Pacific, from the Antarctic to drug-busting operations in the Caribbean, the ship and her crew have demonstrated the versatility and agility that typifies the modern Royal Navy."

"With HMS Edinburgh approaching 30 years of service to the nation, it has been a privilege to be in command of such a 'can do' group of sailors."

Cdr Russell continued: "I would like to thank each and every member of the ship's company who has served on board during my time as the captain."

"I am wholly indebted to them for their unrivalled professionalism which has allowed Edinburgh to be so successful around the globe."

"Of course this would not have been possible without the constant support of our families and friends and I am truly grateful for all of the unseen personal sacrifices that they have made during the six months that their loved ones have been away."



● Hearty waves from two Bangor ratings as the minehunter returns to a wet Faslane

Picture: LA(Phot) Sally Stimson, FRPU North

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Echo sails through her 'road test'

NEARLY 12 months into a marathon deployment to the Middle East, survey ship HMS Echo 'enjoyed' the trials and tribulations of a Royal Navy 'MOT' to test every sailor and bit of kit aboard.

The Devonport-based ship sailed from the UK just three days into 2011 and since passing through the Suez Canal has been working constantly, using her comprehensive survey equipment to improve Admiralty Charts of waters within and without the Gulf.

To sustain her on such a lengthy tour of duty, the ship's company is regularly rotated and frequent maintenance is carried out on Echo whenever she's alongside in one of the ports in the region.

But just like your pride and joy on the driveway, Echo's MOT was due for renewal as 2011 waned.

Enter the Deployed Directed Continuation Training team from the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation in Devonport.

Their task is to fly around the globe (trust us, it's not as glamorous as it sounds) to assess ships big and small and the men and women who serve in them.

Echo's ship's company likened the FOST team to "Formula 1 engineers carrying out your MOT" – ie they're thorough and demanding.

There was one FOSTie for every four of the 60 souls aboard Echo, joining the survey ship in Bahrain, the focal point of RN operations in the Gulf.

The assessors spent five days aboard; every element of the ship was under scrutiny and examination.

The ship was tested on her ability to conduct high-end war fighting at action stations, to food hygiene in the galley and general working and cleanliness routines.

As with any MOT, the safety and road worthiness of your car is measured in the final report.

Echo and her DDCT was little different and received a clean bill of health with no areas requiring further examination, allowing her to proceed as planned.

"For those reading who are familiar with the FOST organisation, the reports and feedback are far more than satisfactory and the feeling of achievement is huge for a team that has been working constantly on operations since January in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf and will continue to do so well into 2012," said her Commanding Officer Cdr Mike O'Sullivan.

'Our world is safer'

A SHELL case from a round used by HMS Liverpool to pummel the forces of ousted Libyan dictator Colonel Gaddafi now takes pride of place in No.10 – as an umbrella stand.

The casing was presented to Prime Minister David Cameron when he invited some 120 Servicemen and women from across the Armed Forces to an official reception in Downing Street to honour their deeds and stress the importance of their actions on a global stage.

Sailors from HM Ships Liverpool, Bangor, Brocklesby, Ocean, York, Turbulent, Iron Duke, Cumberland and Westminster, plus RFAs Fort Rosalie and Orangetree and personnel from 847 and 857 Naval Air Squadron provided a representative sample of the Senior Service's involvement in Operation Ellamy.

The Naval service was involved from the very beginning of the Libyan crisis, evacuating civilians as the country descended into civil war, then launching the first strikes against the Gaddafi regime's military machine courtesy of Tomahawk missiles from HMS Triumph.

Its ships and sailors were there too at the very end, keeping the sea lanes open and witnessing the fall of a succession of towns and cities from the capital Tripoli to Gaddafi's last bastion, Sirte.

Throughout, said Mr Cameron, the sailors, marines and aircrew had shown "incredible courage, professionalism and dedication".

The Prime Minister told the gathered personnel that he had held numerous receptions in No.10 since taking office 18 months ago, but none which filled him with as much pride.

"I can't tell you what a thrill it is having sat, day after day – 68 meetings – in some bunker and we were talking about 'will the minesweeper get through to Misrata?' Well, I've now met the people that were sailing on it.

"We were talking about how HMS Liverpool was getting on, trying to stop Gaddafi in Tripoli – I've now met not only the captain of that ship, but he's very kindly given me my proudest possession: one of the shell casings that was fired in anger that is now going to be an umbrella stand in the Cameron household."

Above all, however, the premier stressed what the men and women committed on Operation Ellamy, which was officially concluded at the end of October, had achieved for the people in Libya – and for the wider world.

"We are no strangers to what Gaddafi was capable of. He murdered the police officer on the



● The Prime Minister shares a light-hearted moment with submariners from HMS Turbulent and Rear Admiral Ian Corder inside No.10

Picture: PO(Phot) Terry Seward, DMC Whitehall

streets of London. He managed to blow up an airliner over the skies of Lockerbie. He gave Semtex to the IRA," Mr Cameron continued.

"Our world is safer, our nation is safer if more countries make the transition from dictatorship to democracy. In Libya there is the real chance that the country could be a success.

"It has a people yearning to be free and it has people who are now able to be free because of the incredibly brave things that you all did in this room."

Wtr Emma Graham was one of six members of HMS Liverpool's ship's company attending the reception; her destroyer – 'the last classic 42' – was in the thick of the fight for seven months, becoming the first British warship fired upon since the Falklands. The Crazy Red Chicken fired back with more than 200 rounds of star and high-explosive shells.

"To be able to meet the Prime Minister – and all the other units we had worked with off Libya – was a huge privilege," said Emma.

Her shipmates were back at No.10 just days later; the destroyer was nominated for a Sun Military Award (aka the Millies) for her actions off Libya.

Among the judges of the awards are Mr Cameron's wife Samantha, England star Frank Lampard, TV hardman Ross Kemp, Jeremy Clarkson and former First Sea Lord Admiral the Lord West.

Liverpool's sailors were once again hosted at a reception in Downing Street with Mr Cameron before decamping south of the Thames to the Imperial War Museum where the awards ceremony was being held as *Navy News* was being published.

"It's an honour to have been invited to No.10 not once but twice in recognition of our contribution and achievements in support of the Libyan population," said Liverpool's CO Cdr Colin Williams.

"I'm immensely proud of my ship's company – as, I am certain, their families are too."

Away from Downing Street, another Libyan veteran was receiving praise from politicians: RFA Fort Rosalie which hosted

Armed Forces Minister Nick Harvey during training off Plymouth.

The supply ship provided food, machinery spare parts, general stores and ammunition for half a dozen Royal Navy vessels during the Libyan mission. Rosalie also acted as a 'transit hub' for more than 300 naval personnel moving in or out of theatre.

Mr Harvey thanked the crew for the "central role" they played in supporting the RN's global mission and their "vital role" off Libya.

He continued: "Above all, I was impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the ship's crew. I salute their courage and commitment."

Diver fined after wreck desecration

A DIVER who stole relics from a World War 1 shipwreck has been fined by the courts – and the items he took presented to the Royal Navy for safekeeping.

Two dozen men were lost when HMS Duke of Albany, a ferry pressed into service to enforce the blockade of Germany, was torpedoed in August 1916 some 30 miles northeast of Wick in Scotland.

The wreck was only discovered about four years ago by expert divers who spent years researching her fate.

It is designated an official war grave – one of 67 protected sites in waters around the UK and beyond; it is illegal to remove anything from the wreck, or tamper with it, without a government licence.

While those who found her treated her as a war grave, one diver who visited the Duke of Albany in the summer of 2010 removed an ornate porthole and an oval-shaped metal plate.

Fellow divers reported the theft and MOD Police detectives were called in. They used Facebook to identify suspects and in September last year recovered the two items at a house in Leicestershire.

"Although we had possession of the items believed to have been removed from the wreck, we still had to conclusively tie them to HMS Duke of Albany," said Det Sgt Peter Cassidy based at Faslane who led the investigation.

"We spoke to a number of maritime and naval experts and were also greatly assisted by members of the diving community who had legitimately visited the

wreck and seen these items in situ.

"It was, in great part, down to their testimony that the offender admitted the offence when he appeared before Kirkwall Sheriff Court."

Duncan Keates, 40, from Anstey, was fined £1,400 for offences under the 1986 Protection of Military Remains Act while the items he removed from the Duke of Albany are now in the possession of the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth.

"This successful prosecution demonstrates that the MOD is determined to enforce the legal protection that it affords to military vessels lost in the country's service," said Peter MacDonald, a naval heritage expert and adviser at Navy Command in Portsmouth.

"We want to encourage responsible, safe and legal wreck diving and strongly support the work of British diving organisations whose own codes of practice uphold the provisions of the act."

The Duke of Albany was a former steamship which sailed between Fleetwood and Belfast before the Great War. On the outbreak of conflict in 1914 she was taken over by the Royal Navy and used as an 'armed boarding vessel' around the Orkneys.

She was torpedoed by German submarine UB27 as she was heading out on patrol. Depth charges aboard exploded as the Duke of Albany sank and 24 men, including her Commanding Officer George Ramage, were killed.

Gone but not forgotten

SHE may no longer fly the ensign of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, but amphibious ship Largs Bay has bowed out with a humanitarian award.

The landing support ship has won the Firmin Sword of Peace – the most coveted title in the Armed Forces when it comes to helping those in dire straits.

In the case of Largs Bay, which has now been bought by the Royal Australian Navy, she delivered hundreds of tonnes of rations and equipment to Haiti after a terrible earthquake struck in 2010.

As well as saving countless lives, that assistance ensured she became the fifth RFA winner of the Firmin (previously Wilkinson) Sword of Peace in the past 15 years.

The ship was dispatched to the Caribbean by Government after more than 230,000 people were killed in the January 2010 disaster.

Largs was on exercise in the Arctic Circle when the hurricane struck. She was rapidly reconfigured to provide humanitarian disaster relief and sailed from Southampton.

When she arrived off the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince, she made use of her landing craft to cover the final stretch of water to the beach as the harbour was unusable.

Working with American personnel, the ship delivered 430 tonnes of supplies and 165 tonnes of rations – equating to 389,000 meals. Meanwhile engineers worked ashore to repair generators and to rewire key administrative and public service buildings.

In the midst of this the ship's company also managed to raise £10,500 for the Disaster Emergency Committee by running the distance from the UK to Haiti on the on-board running machines.

Presenting the sword at a ceremony in Portland, Commander in Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar said Largs Bay's efforts had saved lives.

"There is no doubt in my mind at all that the teamwork and sheer determination displayed by the ship's company of RFA Largs Bay saved many lives and your help continues to make a difference to the people of Haiti," he added.

"It's a great privilege for me to be here to hand over the Firmin sword of peace, and I'd really like to thank Tony Kelly for Firmin's sponsorship of this prestigious award which was established in 1966."

Capt Ian Johnson RFA, Largs Bay's Commanding Officer at the time, added: "When I consider the previous recipients of this award and their fantastic achievements I feel extremely honoured to accept it on behalf of all who served on Largs Bay during the Haiti relief effort in 2010."

Since 1995, RFA Sir Galahad (twice – for providing aid to Angola and Iraq), Fort George (flood relief in Mozambique), Black Rover and Sir Tristram (assisting in Central America in the wake of Hurricane Mitch) have all been named winners of the award.

The sword, which goes back to 1966, is presented to the military unit or ship which has made the most valuable contribution to humanitarian causes by developing and strengthening good relations with the inhabitants of any community in the UK or overseas. When Wilkinson closed in 2005, Firmin took over the award.

As for Largs Bay herself, she was commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy last month as HMAS Choules in honour of the last veteran of the Great War who died in May aged 110.

British-born senior rating Claude Choules served in first the RN, then the RAN.

The Choules has been given the new pennant number L100 to mark the 100th anniversary of the RAN.

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Astute impresses in Norfolk



PASSING the cruisers USS Monterey (left) and USS Normandy this is the world's most advanced submarine making her debut in the world's biggest naval base.

HMS Astute made her debut at Norfolk Naval Station – roughly 11 times larger than HM Naval Base Portsmouth and home to more than 70 warships – on the latest stage of her comprehensive trials package in the Americas.

The Faslane-based hunter killer boat has already successfully fired Tomahawk missiles on to a range in Florida and is gearing up for key sonar and torpedo trials in the New Year.

With Astute beginning to make her mark on the naval stage, she visited Norfolk Naval Station to fly the flag for the Silent Service and host numerous VIPs from the Royal and US Navies, keen to see the progress the submarine is making.

Indeed, a procession of senior officers filed aboard – among them Britain's highest-ranking officer across the Pond Vice Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt (an aviator by trade), and Rear Admiral Ted Branch USN, Deputy Fleet Forces

Command, responsible for the US Navy's Atlantic forces – as did American submariners, staff from the British Embassy in Washington, and Rear Admiral Simon Lister, the RN's Director Submarines.

And in return, the senior submariner on the Eastern Seaboard, Vice Admiral John Richardson, Commander Submarine Force Atlantic, hosted a reception for the Astutes; he was also given a thorough tour of the 7,400-tonne British boat.

Senior US Navy submarine staff officer Rear Admiral Michael Connor welcomed Astute's logistics officer Lt Neil Howe to the special band of brothers in the Silent Service by presenting him with his dolphins.

"You are joining an international brotherhood of submariners who wear their dolphins with pride – they represent the trust and fellowship that other submariners now have in you," the American admiral said awarding the submariner's trademark qualification.

"They can sleep soundly in their bunks knowing you have the 'watch'."



In all, the A-boat hosted seven admirals boasting 16 stars among them during the short stay.

There were gold-braidless visitors to Astute too; many US deeps berthed in boats near to the British submarine took the opportunity to look around and take notes with their UK counterparts.

And the four days in Virginia – where temperatures were still in double figures, unlike Astute's home base – also gave the 100-strong crew a brief chance to relax after the demanding autumn trials programme.

They were hosted throughout their time in Norfolk by the crew of the USS Albany – one of the Americans' Los Angeles-class attack boats – and "got on particularly well as submariners in arms".

With hosting and relaxing done, Astute departed Norfolk and made for King's Bay in Georgia, home, like Faslane, to nuclear deterrent boats, and serving as a key port for the A-boat as she conducts her 'first of class' trials which will make the introduction of her six sisters into service much quicker.

"This deployment of Astute is all about developing and proving her world-class capabilities and she is beginning to prove her real worth. She's well on her way to taking her place in the operational Fleet," said Capt Philip Buckley, Captain Faslane Flotilla – and responsible for overseeing Astute's sea trials.

"That she also has had the opportunity to show off to our US Navy partners further strengthens our long-term relationship, built on our shared operational success, innovation and the constant striving to maintain a hard capability edge."

After Christmas/New Year leave, Astute is due to head to the specialist Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Centre (AUTEC) ranges in the Bahamas where she'll fire her Spearfish torpedoes and conduct sonar trials.

After that she'll visit a 'magnetic silencing facility' to measure and reduce Astute's magnetic signature – thus making the stealthy boat even more difficult for potential foes to find.

Once all those trials are complete, she'll make her way back to the Clyde in the spring.

Picture: MC1 Todd A Schaffer, US Navy

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Corps' call of duty

GET out of the car – now!

A Royal Marines Commando apprehends a 'high value target' – all thanks to you.

This is a scene from 'Green Ops: Command a Commando', an internet-based interactive film aimed at finding the Royal Marines officers of the future.

Users play the role of an officer leading a troop of commandos on a covert mission to apprehend a suspect deep inside enemy territory.

They make real-time decisions at various steps of the way – users only have seconds to give their instructions. Those orders are followed to the letter by the men, leading to the mission's success or failure.

Various scenarios were filmed over two days in and around Woodbury Common in Devon, close to the green berets' Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, and on the Tregantle ranges near HMS Raleigh in Cornwall.

A Commando Lynx and Jungly Sea Kings from the Commando Helicopter Force and Offshore Raiding Craft also took part in the filming back in September.

The online film is part of a major recruiting push by the Corps in conjunction with specialist marketing and advertising firm WCRS&Co, who are also behind Formula 1 champ Lewis Hamilton's adverts for Santander and Sky Movies' Christmas campaign *inter alia*.

It's the first time such an interactive, online method has been used to find potential officers – Green Ops is aimed at 16 to 24-year-olds.

In the first ten days that the film was live on the web, more than 13,000 people had a go – spending around ten minutes at a time trying to complete the mission.

"Green Ops: Command a Commando is such an exciting project because it does something never before done – put potential officers in charge of a troop of Royal Marines Commandos," said Capt Mike Davis Marks, Captain Naval Recruiting.

"This experience will give a perfect taste of what it takes to lead one of the world's most elite fighting units."

You can give it a go yourself via www.facebook.com/RoyalMarinesGreenOps – and you can see more videos from the wider recruiting campaign for the Corps at www.wcrs.co.uk/clients/royal-marines/

Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clee, RNPOTYx3

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Peeking Duck

NUDGING carefully around a headland in Loch Torridon is Her Majesty's Ship Iron Duke, testing future navigators on a three-week circumnavigation of the UK.

The Portsmouth-based frigate was picked to host the 'Spec N' course (specialist navigation), a three-week navigation of the UK through some of the most demanding waters.

Hopeful navigators were tested to the full on their ability to conduct high-speed coastal passages and snap anchorages – and the 'close to shore' nature of the course afforded the 180 or so sailors aboard the Iron Duke some spectacular sights, from the magnificent desolation of Scapa Flow to the stark beauty of the Western Highlands.

During the intensive three weeks, the trainee navigators had to guide the Type 23 safely through traffic separation scheme in the Dover Strait, one of the world's busiest 'choke points'; then it was along the coast of East Anglia; up the Humber into Hull (as we featured last month for a visit to one of her affiliated locales); a spot of exercising with RAF Sea King fliers from Leconfield; under the Forth road and rail bridges (in and out), into Scapa Flow (to honour the men of HMS Royal Oak); then past Cape Wrath and around the west coast of Scotland.

Loch Torridon (about 20 miles north of Kyle of Lochalsh) is a regular (if not necessarily popular) haunt of Type 23s and Type 42s conducting specialist navigational training.

At its narrowest the entrance to the upper loch is about 1,100ft across. And HMS Iron Duke? Well, her beam is 53ft.

So plenty of room to spare then...

Well, not really because for the final wheel-over into the upper loch, there are only 120ft of safe water either side – and then it's the steep rock face of the mountains.

And evidently the Portsmouth-based warship made it in and out safely, for she was soon(ish) being thrown around the equally-challenging (for 'challenging' read 'treacherous') waters of the Channel Islands (another popular destination for navigational training...).

That training also allowed Iron Duke to pay her first visit to

Jersey as an affiliate of the bailiwick.

The Channel Island has been without an affiliated ship since fishery patrol ship HMS Jersey was paid off nearly two decades ago (although HMS Daring enjoys a strong association with neighbouring Guernsey).

Iron Duke, already affiliated with Kingston-upon-Hull, was named in 2010 as Jersey's new ship – but operational commitments (not least her inaugural deployment to the Gulf) prevented her visiting until last autumn.

The ship spent four days in St Helier, Jersey's capital, where a packed programme was lined up, beginning with a 15-gun salute to the island's Lieutenant Governor General Sir John McColl upon entering Elizabeth Harbour.

The general came aboard with invited guests for a formal reception, as did local schoolchildren for rather less formal tours of the 4,500-tonne warship, and the staff of Jersey Pottery came aboard to present some of their ceramics to the wardroom.

Jersey-born former Chelsea and England footballer Graeme Le Saux also called in on the frigate to exchange gifts and play a five-a-side tournament with the ship's football team and other local sides.

And for six hours on the Sunday of their four-day stop the gangway was opened to islanders to look around.

In all, during the brief but successful visit, the ship hosted some 1,800 islanders of all ages.

"It has been a tremendous honour for me to bring HMS Iron Duke – and her ship's company to the island of Jersey," said CO Cdr Nick Cooke-Priest.

"The warmth and the sincerity of the reception we received on our first visit to our new island affiliate has been overwhelming.

"The many relationships that have been established, both before and during this visit, are extremely important to us and we will continue to nurture these associations during the weeks and months ahead to ensure that Jersey and HMS Iron Duke remain mutually supportive."

After her inaugural visit to Jersey, Iron Duke made for Plymouth to take part in training with the team at Flag Officer Sea Training, before returning home to Portsmouth.



● Got any hose? A youngster practises firefighting during the visit to Jersey while (below) the ceremonial gun is fired as the frigate arrives in St Helier and (right) a bugler performs at the ceremonial sunset for Jersey VIPs



Civvies to take over SAR role

THIS is a sight which in just a few years will be no more: an aircrewman from 771 Naval Air Squadron lifting a downed aviator to safety from the Channel.

Come 2016, this is a mission which will be performed by civilians, the Government has determined.

More than half a century of search and rescue missions by Naval aviators will come to an end in four years' time as civilians take over the vital service.

The Department for Transport announced that it will take over responsibility for helicopter search and rescue around the UK – merging a service currently provided by the Fleet Air Arm, RAF and Coastguard.

In the case of the Royal Navy, the lifesaving is performed by 771 NAS based at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall and HMS Gannet in Prestwick, near Ayr – the busiest search and rescue helicopter unit in the country.

It is a service which was born after World War 2, largely to pluck crew from aircraft which went down at sea.

Since then, the mission has grown to embrace saving all life at sea – as well as those in difficulty on land; the majority of sorties flown by Gannet's Sea Kings are over the mountains of western Scotland, rescuing walkers and climbers.

Crews say the rescue missions they fly are the most challenging – and dangerous – outside a war zone.

But with the veteran Sea Kings due to retire by early 2016, the Government has been looking for some time to combine the UK's search and rescue operations under the SAR Harmonisation initiative.

In 2010 it picked a consortium to provide the service, flying a new helicopter crewed by a mix of civilians and Service personnel.

That contract was cancelled last February since when the Department for Transport and MOD have been looking at the future of SAR provision.

Transport Secretary Justine Greening told MPs that her department would take over the service, which will be fully civilianised, provided from ten bases instead of the existing 12.

With a fleet of modern helicopters, the service required can be provided from ten full-time bases which means that RAE Boulmer in Northumberland and the Coastguard helicopter base at Portland will no longer be needed.

"The Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force crews have shown great dedication and professionalism in delivering an exemplary Search and Rescue service



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Sterratt, RNAS Culdrose

for many years, and we owe them all great thanks for this," Ms Greening said.

"Looking forward, we are confident that, building on nearly 30 years of civilian service provided under contract to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, a fully civilian service will be able to maintain the same standards in the future."

By civilianising the search and rescue world, Ms Greening said military air and ground crews would be released to focus on front-line duties – although until the new set up is in place, Naval fliers will continue to perform their rescue duties.

Work is now under way to study the options for the employment of Naval aircrew, engineers and maintainers in the Sea King community.

The Government intends to award the contract for the replacement service early next year.

In the meantime, the lifesaving goes on.

Within days of Ms Greening's announcements, a

Gannet crew faced one of its most challenging sorties of 2011, battling through Scottish snowstorms to rescue a woman on the island of Arran.

The four-strong crew was scrambled to pick up a consultant and nurse from the Emergency Medical Retrieval Team at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre in Glasgow.

What should have been a mere 20-minute hop to the city centre became a more complicated venture with the distinctive red and grey Sea King forced to fly down to 200ft and follow the Clyde into Glasgow in order to avoid the blizzard and freezing conditions on higher ground. As a result, the journey took twice as long.

The helicopter then faced a hard slog into bands of low cloud, freezing conditions, driving snow and a 30-knot wind from the north-west on its way to the Clyde island.

"We were pretty much flying under and around bands of snow clouds throughout," explained the pilot

and Gannet's CO Lt Cdr Debdash Bhattacharya.

"And this did make flying in the dark quite tricky. One minute we could be in relatively clear air and the next it was almost white out.

"There were occasions where we were forced to fly by radar alone, as, even with our night vision goggles, we had lost all visual references.

"Our observer, Lt Alex Stevenson, controlled the aircraft's position with reference to the radar during these periods, talking my co-pilot Lt Mark Wielopolski and me into the safest area and was essentially our eyes for parts of the journey.

"And, on approach into Arran, we encountered some turbulence from the mountains."

Once on the ground, the retrieval team was rushed to the hospital at Lamlash to stabilise the patient before getting her ready to transfer to Crosshouse Hospital in Kilmarnock.

The Sea King team took the opportunity to fly back to Prestwick briefly to refuel, before being alerted to return to Arran by the Coastguard once the woman had been stabilised.

She was successfully delivered to Crosshouse where she was kept in for observation.

It was the second delivery of the night to the Kilmarnock infirmary for the duty crew, which had evacuated a man with a leg injury from the ship MV North Sea Giant in the North Channel between Northern Ireland and Stranraer.

On this mission, the aircrew were again faced with dense snow clouds and strong wind, though, with the rough seas, this time there was also a pitching ship to contend with.

Hovering a matter of 10-15ft above the ship's deck, CPO Jason Bibby, the team's aircrewman and paramedic, was winched down to the casualty, where he was able to stabilise the patient before transferring him back into the Sea King.

Gannet were also called upon when the worst storm in a decade bashed Scotland in mid-December.

A Sea King was despatched to Loch Muick – about half a dozen miles from Balmoral – to search for five missing walkers.

In conditions described by the aircrew as "reasonably challenging" – gusts up to 30kts, temperatures below zero and a good 2ft of snow on the ground – the helicopter scoured the area, investigating remote huts, for signs of the missing ramblers, while on the ground police and mountain rescue teams did the same.

In the end, the quintet were found safe and well about four miles from the loch near Glen Doll.



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Women to make submarine history at last

FOR the first time in the 110-year history of the Royal Navy's Submarine Service women are to serve at sea.

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond announced that female sailors will go to sea in boats by the end of 2013 – with the first volunteers beginning their training this year.

Although women have been serving at sea since 1990 – and make up nearly one in every ten Royal Navy personnel – submarines have remained a male preserve on health grounds.

Concerns about higher levels of carbon dioxide in a submarine's atmosphere carrying risks to women's health ruled them out of service in Britain's fleet of nuclear submarines.

But recent research by the Institute of Naval Medicine in Gosport showed that these risks were unfounded and that there were no medical reasons for excluding women from service in boats.

That research came as part of an 18-month review conducted by the Royal Navy looking at the legal, operational, health, social, technical, and financial issues of allowing women to go to sea with the Silent Service.

A survey of female RN personnel revealed that one in five would be interested in joining submarines.

The Vanguard class of nuclear deterrent boats will be the first to carry female submariners.

Initially this will be a small number of officers – volunteers who will begin training next year and will take up their posts towards the end of next year. The first female ratings will be recruited and trained from 2014.

Women will also be able

to serve in Astute-class hunter killer submarines from 2016 when the necessary modifications to the state-of-the-art boats' accommodation have been made.

As with the decision two decades ago to allow women to serve in surface ships, the announcement has provoked lively debate – both for and against, within and without the community of 'deeps'.

Of the decision, Mr Hammond said: "We will value our history and tradition – but we will not be slaves to them."

"The Royal Navy has always been at the forefront of innovation, and this decision represents another step in its distinguished tradition of recognising the contribution of its people and making the very best use of the talent from which it can recruit."

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery – the Royal Navy's head of personnel and training – said that the decision had been "carefully considered".

He continued: "It will allow the Submarine Service to draw on the widest range of talent and skills of our people – those in service and those yet to join."

"It will give our women the same opportunities as men to enjoy a fulfilling and rewarding career in the Submarine Service."

The original decision not to allow women to serve in submarines was taken back in 1993 and has been reviewed periodically since.

Following the recent 18-month review, medical evidence shows that there is no bar to women serving on submarines, although pregnant submariners will not be able to serve at sea for health and safety grounds because of the risk to their unborn child.

'No glass ceilings...'

OBSERVING the work of her operations room team in HMS Shoreham is the Royal Navy's 'pioneer of the year'.

That's the title bestowed on Lt Cdr Sarah West by women's magazine *Red*.

It did so because come April, Lt Cdr West will have a new rank – commander – and a new title: Commanding Officer, HMS Portland.

In doing so she becomes the first female officer to do so of any destroyer or frigate – what the mainstream press call 'major warships'.

To the media, it's a big deal; author, *US FT* managing editor, former Journalist of the Year winner – and judge of *Red*'s 'Hot Women' awards – Gillian Tett says the 39-year-old officer has "challenged many of the traditional concepts of what it means to be a woman".

But to Sarah West it is simply career progression.

"There are many female commanders in the Navy, all high achievers," she says. "People are just talking about me because I happen to be the first female to take command of a major warship."

It is a command she won on merit and in the face of tough competition. Her superior officers said that she showed "leadership, confidence, moral courage, sound judgement and exceptional people skills".

Such qualities she has already demonstrated in command of a succession of Sandown-class minehunters – HM Ships Ramsey, Pembroke, Penzance and, most recently, HMS Shoreham; *more about the latter, below right*.

"It is what I signed up for," she said. "Sailors should want to go to sea."

She knows Type 23s well enough too; she has served in HMS Somerset and subsequently as operations officer and then executive officer of HMS Norfolk.

And it can all be traced back to a newspaper advert from the mid-90s; fresh from earning a degree in mathematics from the University of Hertfordshire, Sarah West was sitting in an office at work one day, wondering what the future held, when an advertisement caught her eye.

"The next thing I knew I was walking through the doors of the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth to begin my training as a warfare officer," she said, "and I have loved every minute of it."

In her first two years she served with Battleaxe, Sandown and Sheffield. She joined HMS Cottessmore in 1997 after selection as a small ship navigator and then it was back to Sheffield as Officer of the Watch and on to HMS Somerset as her navigator.

She successfully completed the Principal Warfare Officers' Course, specialising in underwater warfare and then joined HMS Cornwall as a principal warfare officer. "I certainly had plenty of opportunities to go to sea, but as I say, it is what I signed up for."

In 2005 she was appointed to the Commander Amphibious Task Group as the underwater warfare specialist and her job there included the planning and execution of operations and exercises around the world, including the evacuation of civilians from Beirut and the Lebanon.

In amongst these and other demanding staff jobs, including coordinating the Royal Navy's contribution to operations in Iraq after the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime, she also found the time to complete an honours degree in law.

Sarah is one of approximately 3,300 women in the Naval Service, of whom 620 are officers. This compares with almost 32,000 men, 5,990 of them of officer rank. That's just over ten per cent – and this ratio is continued at sea... except on Shoreham which, like numerous minehunters, is otherwise all-male. Not so HMS Portland.

"Actually, when I joined up, of



the three Services I thought that the Royal Navy offered the best opportunities for women," Sarah says.

"I have never experienced the slightest hint of any attitude in the Navy that prefers men over women. Of course, not everyone who joins the Navy wanting to be a captain will end up one."

"I have worked hard and I have enjoyed my career so far and I have fulfilled my ambitions to go to sea and to command warships."

She spent eight and a half months with her team in the Gulf on mine warfare duties – a permanent presence has been

maintained in the region for five years now, thanks to the rotation of crews and, less frequently, the rotation of the ships themselves.

The sailor in her admitted: "When we joined the ship we were flown out to the Gulf, which is not nearly as much fun as making the 7,000-mile transit by sea, across the Bay of Biscay and into the Med via Gibraltar, then through the Suez Canal."

By then she'll have handed over command of Shoreham and headed north to Rosyth to take charge of HMS Portland which is undergoing refit.

"I have no particular ambitions,

save to do the very best I can. But if there are glass ceilings in the Navy I haven't encountered them yet," the lieutenant commander says.

"Portland is a fine ship and I am very much looking forward to taking command. I have seen the world and I have loved every minute of my 16 years in the Service."

"I have recommended the Navy to my friends and I am proud to say that some of them have taken my advice and joined up. They are all doing very well. It's a great life."

Picture: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan, FRPU North

Kent returns from refit

HMS Kent has returned to Portsmouth after a 12-month £24m revamp in Scotland.

During her year in Rosyth, the ship has been fitted with a new 'Kryten' 4.5in gun in place of the older bulbous one, new 30mm guns, an upgraded Seawolf air defence missile system effectively doubling its range, and Sonar 2087

The revamp took 50 weeks, devoured 295,000 man hours, 15,000 litres of paint were applied to the hull and compartments – that's enough to fill the tanks of more than 270 Ford Focuses – and in excess of 500 items of machinery and equipment were overhauled.

A new command system was installed as was the latest version of the military's computer system, DII, which makes it easier for the ship's company to work with the rest of the MOD, both at sea and when alongside.

After inspections, exercises and trials off the east coast of Scotland to put Kent's new systems and equipment to the test, they brought the frigate south to begin the long journey back to front-line readiness.



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PATRON: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

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Portsmouth

PO2 8RN

Telephone: 023 9263 9534

Fax: 023 9267 7574

Email: rnchildren@btconnect.com



A bit of a do in Adur

IT'S like waiting for a bus.

You spend years hoping your affiliated ship will drop in – and then she pays two visits in ten months.

HMS Shoreham called in on her namesake Sussex town for the second time in 2011 – and locals made the most of it, because it will be four years before the Faslane-based minehunter can return.

The ship is Gulf-bound in the spring, part of the minehunting force's long-standing commitment in the region where four ships are currently based.

To give Shorehamites (we looked the demonym up...) a flavour of what the ship will be doing when she deploys, the sailors laid on a 'capability demonstration' for locals ahead of a reception aboard the Sandown-class vessel.

Also hosted aboard the warship were various local groups and organisations, including Worthing Sea Cadets, who enjoyed organised tours.

Shoreham's sailors were last in West Sussex in March when the freedom of the small seaside town was bestowed upon their ship.

Eight months later and the 40 or so men and women had the chance to exercise that right

for the first time – the traditional ceremony of marching with bayonets fixed, drums beating and all that.

The weather gods were kind as the sailors formed up at headquarters of Adur District Council then marched through the heart of Shoreham, watched and applauded by the public as they went (pictured above by LA(Phot) Darby Allen), ending at Sussex Yacht Club, where an official reception was held.

"All ships in the Royal Navy have civic affiliations and it is always a high point to be able to visit these special twinned towns or areas which give us so much support and focus," said Lt Cdr Sarah West, Shoreham's Commanding Officer.

"But, for most ships, this might come around once a year if they're lucky. So, for us to be able to visit Shoreham twice in the same year is very unusual and something we are absolutely delighted about."

"Even the old and bold aboard admitted to me later on that they welled up – it's an emotional event."

"I think you saw it on their faces – they are extremely proud and I am so pleased that they had such a good turn-out."



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with all who serve

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LEGION





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And, one is tempted to add, to boldly go...

This year the ship performing those duties is new.

Making her debut in the ice this austral summer is HMS Protector, one-time oil rig support vessel MV Polarbjørn (Polar bear) which operated largely in the Caribbean and Tasman Seas.

On loan to the RN until 2014, the Norwegian-built icebreaker spent the spring, summer and autumn of 2011 being 'navalised': her flight deck was moved to the stern, bespoke RN and surveying kit was installed and the ship's company were trained thoroughly in the art of operating and maintaining her and, if necessary, dealing with any disaster which might occur.

For the latter, she spent five weeks undergoing Operational Sea Training off Plymouth (which she passed).

Because of her civilian background, Protector isn't like a typical RN vessel.

All the ship's company eat together as one – captain, officers, senior and junior rates – in an informal cafeteria-style galley. There are no stewards and irrespective of rank, you queue for your meal.

Accommodation is more RFA than RN. *En suite* cabins. Three to a room for junior ratings, twin and individual cabins for senior ratings and officers. There are carpets

Picture: LA(Phot) Arron Hoare, HMS Protector



throughout. Ten-channel satellite TV. Radio.

The bridge offers 360° panoramic views, its floor is wood-panelled and there's a small coffee bar area with plush seating.

Because Protector wasn't built by the Royal Navy, the ship's company are also spared the chintzy-patterned upholstery and curtains which haunts most of the Fleet.

And until Jack got his hands on Protector, there were no bars aboard; it was a dry ship. They've now been added, although largely so the ship can host VIP guests

when on deployment – the lean manning generally rules out drinking at sea.

There is no operations room – that's conducted from the bridge, while the survey data is processed in a small compartment (dominated by a large printer called Harry) at the back of the superstructure.

For surveying, she has a hull-mounted multi-beam echo sounder plus the survey motor boat James Caird IV (named for the Scottish benefactor of Shackleton's 1914 trans-Antarctic expedition). The data the pair

collect will be handed over to the UK Hydrographic Office in Taunton, which produces the world-standard Admiralty Charts.

Chacon containers in the hold are used as the ship's office, buffer's store, workshop, armoury, magazine, photographer's studio and communications hub.

Although the ship's company practise traditional firefighting drills, each compartment has heat-activated sprinklers, while in the engine room a special foam is used to extinguish any blaze. It's 98 per cent air which means it can put out the flames but anyone in there

can still breathe normally. The entire compartment can be filled with the foam in just six minutes.

Despite only being on the Royal Navy's books since April, the ship has already forged links with Cambridge, the Scott Polar Research Institute, 2 Battalion Parachute Regiment and the Worshipful Companies of Wax Chandlers and Clock Makers *inter alia*.

This is the sixth ship to bear the Protector name which dates back to the mid-18th Century. The first was a storeship/fireship which saw action against the French in the Indian Ocean during the Seven Years' War.

She was followed by an 1805 gunbrig which served for three decades and spent her earlier years in the South Atlantic before being converted to a survey ship for duties around the Channel and North Sea.

Protector No.3 was a gunboat which took part in the international effort to quell the Boxer rebellion in China and was later transferred to the fledgling Royal Australian Navy.

By far the most famous Protector – and one which paved the way for today's ship – was a 1936 fast netlayer which served in the first half of WW2 until she was damaged by an aerial torpedo at Port Said in 1941.

Repaired, post-war she was converted to an Antarctic patrol ship and conducted 13 deployments serving the Falklands and various survey bases on the frozen continent. She was sold for breaking up in 1970.

The penultimate Protector was an oil rig support vessel Seaforth Saga which was bought in 1983 as a Falklands patrol vessel, a duty performed as HMS Protector until 1987 when she was sold.



Sadras..... 1758
Negapatam 1758
Cape of Good Hope.... 1806
Norway 1940
Libya..... 1940-41

Motto: *Foy pour devoir* (faith for duty)
Pennant number: A173
Builder: GC Rieber, Bergen, Norway
Laid down: September 30, 2000
Launched: July 21, 2001
Commissioned: June 23, 2011
Displacement: 6,250 tonnes
Length: 89.7 metres
Beam: 18 metres
Draught: 7.2 metres
Speed: 15 knots
Range: 6,000 nautical miles
Complement: 88 (no more than 65 aboard typically)
Propulsion: 2 x Rolls-Royce Marine diesel engines;
4 x Tunnel thrusters; 1 x deployable Azimuth thruster
Armament: Self-defence small arms (all struck below 60°S)
Sensors: 1 x hull-mounted multi-beam echo sounder;
2 x navigational radars;
1 x ice navigation display
Boats: Survey motor boat James Caird IV, work boat Terra Nova, 2 x Pacific 22 RIBs, 1 x fast rescue craft, 3 x inflatable boats
Helicopter: flight deck can accommodate medium-size aircraft such as Lynx

Battle Honours
Facts and figures



HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.87 – Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay

ASK most sailors to name the Navy's greatest 20th Century leader and Cunningham is probably going to top the list.

There's a good chance that not too far behind him will be the name of one Bertram Home Ramsay.

Ramsay was not a great commander in the Cunningham sense, not a leader choreographing the movements of a fleet from the bridge of his flagship, but an organiser *par excellence* – pictured here in a rare colour portrait, one of a series taken of senior figures involved with the Normandy invasions, a collection of images now held by the photographic archives of the Imperial War Museum.

A quiet, modest figure, demanding of his staff and himself, he bore tremendous burden stoically, invariably confiding only in his wife. Thoroughness was his trademark – as was his willingness to delegate to the junior officers around him, a characteristic which led to a pre-war clash with the old guard in the Admiralty.

That clash led to his resignation as Chief-of-Staff to the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet – a move which would have ended his career, had not war engulfed Europe.

Assigned the post of Vice Admiral, Dover, fate would see to it that he was thrust into the crucible of war in May and June 1940.

Ramsay's diligence and ability to delegate were key to the improvised evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from the Continent.

Despite the severe strain which the ten days of Dunkirk placed on Ramsay – the operation stretched "everyone to the limit," he wrote to his wife – the results of the evacuation were "beyond belief", thanks largely to the Navy running like "a perfect machine."

Operation Dynamo earned Ramsay plaudits from ordinary soldiers, colonels and generals, and George VI, who knighted him three days after the evacuation ended.

He would go on to be the architect of the amphibious landings in North Africa (Operation Torch), Sicily (Husky) and finally Normandy (Overlord).

Yet the image of 'Ramsay the staff officer' rather obscures 'Ramsay the sailor'. For much of his career, he was a seagoing officer. He served in the first commission of the revolutionary Dreadnought, commanded the cruisers Weymouth and Kent and the 'Tiddly Quid', battleship HMS Royal Sovereign.

Ramsay's formative years in command, however, came with the Dover Patrol – protecting the passage of men and material to France and preventing German forces slipping through the

Channel on or below the surface.

After commanding the floating gun platform HMS M25, a monitor used to pummel the German lines, in late 1917 he was appointed commanding officer of the legendary destroyer HMS Broke which had charged at the High Seas Fleet at Jutland and subsequently careered out of control.

In the second week of May 1918, Broke was one of eight destroyers assigned to a daring – and often overlooked – raid to keep German submarines bottled up in their Flanders base.

The Zeebrugge Raid on St George's Day had partially blocked the exit from that port. A similar attempt along the coast at Ostend had failed wretchedly. On May 9, the Royal Navy returned – determined to scuttle HMS Vindictive in the narrow channel leading to the harbour and beyond to Bruges.

Broke led three other destroyers west of Ostend, sending star shells into the night sky to light the way for the blocking force: Zeebrugge veteran HMS Vindictive, protected by a cluster of motor boats.

As they neared their final destination, the launches peeled away to cause havoc. HMS CMB 26 fired a torpedo at Ostend pier from very close range – too close, for the shallow water carried the reverberations from the blast and shook the launch so violently that her engines were damaged and seams parted, causing her to take on water.

The boat's mechanic succeeded in stopping the ingress of the North Sea – and in restarting the engines, enough to limp to Broke who took her in tow.

The 35-year-old Cdr Ramsay received a Mention in Despatches and was named *chevalier* (knight) of the *Légion d'honneur* by the French.

In time, he would earn the Republic's second-highest honour, named a *grand officier* of the *Légion d'honneur*.

That distinction, however, was awarded posthumously.

Ramsay was killed on the second day of January 1945 when his Fleet Air Arm Hudson crashed on take-off at Toussus-le-Noble, a village four miles south of Versailles; the admiral had been due to confer with Montgomery in Brussels.

Half a century later, villagers erected a memorial to Ramsay – and the four other sailors killed in the accident – outside the town hall, where the Union Flag is flown.

■ THIS photograph (TR 2626) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@iwm.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.



Jewel purpose

AH, SO that's what you can see through the keyhole...

HMS Diamond's fire-fighting party prepare to leave the hangar and enter the heart of Britain's third Type 45 destroyer as her training reaches its climax.

For not only is D34 the third 45 to undergo the rigours of Operational Sea Training, she's now also the third 45 ready to deploy.

The £1bn destroyer received a 'satisfactory' score from the assessors of the Flag Officer Sea Training.

Satisfactory = pass. Which means the ship is officially sanctioned to deploy, joining Daring and Dauntless on the 'available for operations' list.

All three are scheduled to carry out their inaugural deployments this year while their three younger sisters – Dragon, Defender and finally Duncan – are undergoing training, trials and final fitting out respectively.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Back to Diamond and her autumn in the hands of the FOSTies.

"This is a brand-new Type 45 getting ready for operations and one of our main tasks is getting the ship's company ready," explained Diamond's CO Cdr Ian Clarke.

"For each of us undergoing the sea training we are in post for the first time in a new ship and that is a serious challenge."

Around four out of every five pieces of kit on the 45s are new to the Royal Navy – hence all that talk about 'step changes in capability'.

Which count for nought if they don't work. And for the sake of numerous exercises, the FOST staff made sure quite a bit of it didn't, especially in the legendary/infamous Thursday War, where all individual serials such as air defence, fast attack craft, anti-submarine, breakdowns, missile hits, fires and flood are combined for several exhilarating and exhausting hours.

"We have had fires and floods, lost our propulsion and steering – all of that impacts on my ability to fight the ship."

"This is where things get serious for the ship as things we hope don't happen for real always happen on a Thursday War."

Hence...
Brace! Brace! Brace!

Then.
Bang! Bang! Bang!

And.
Fire! Fire! Fire!

A missile strikes just forward of the hangar, the lights fail and smoke quickly billows through several compartments while casualties scream for help.

All jolly good fun. And all jolly well dealt with – hence the approval of the FOST assessors.

While the Diamonds are, in the words of their captain, "really pleased" to have come through two months of exacting training, so too are the FOST staff.

They can have a reputation of being a rather fearsome bunch, but nothing pleases them more than a ship passing Operational Sea Training. Failure is an option, but not one they like to see...

"There's a real sense of pride for us when a ship comes through their training and is successful, because it really is a thorough test," explained Cdr Andrew Burns, Commander of Sea Training at FOST.

Be it a 42 or a 45, a vessel flying the White Ensign or the standard of the *Deutsche Marine* or *Marinha Portuguesa* – foreign navies make extensive use of FOST – they enjoy no favouritism and suffer no prejudices.

"We train ships from different nations, but the standards are absolute that they have to reach," Cdr Burns stressed.



Picture: PO(Phot) Paul Punter, FRPU East

Top-three finish for Yeovilton

IN JULY it was enjoyed by almost 30,000 people.

And next month it could bag a tourism award.

Yeovilton Air Day 2011 will learn if it was the 'tourism event of the year' in the South West; at the very least organisers will walk away with a bronze as it was named one of the top-three events of the year.

The 2011 air show was billed as a celebration of the Lynx to mark the nimble helicopter's 40 years of flight.

It was joined in the Somerset skies by Polish Air Force MiG-29s, French Navy Rafale and Super Etendards, Royal Netherlands Air Force Apache gunships, and the world's only airworthy Sea Vixen and Vulcan bomber.

In all, there were six hours of flying displays which had aviation buffs drooling – 'a bit of everything', 'hard to beat' and 'best show of the year' were among some of the accolades showered on Yeovilton by enthusiasts.

Also among the crowds that day was a team of industry judges, assessing not merely what went on overhead, but also on the ground, gauging the whole 'visitor experience' – such as car parking, ease of access around the site, and toilet facilities.

If it takes gold, the Somerset air station will go on to represent the region at the subsequent at the national VisitEngland awards.

Whether it wins or is named a runner-up at the February 6 final in Torquay – where principal guest will be well-known travel writer Simon Calder – the air station is pressing ahead with plans for the 2012 event, brought forward to June 23 to avoid any clashes with the Olympics and other summer events.



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● Muster and commander... (Above left) kit inspection in the field followed (left) by a spot of morning phys and (above) the musicians grapple with SA80 rifles

Instrument

IT'S a glamorous life, being a Royal Marine Bandie.

You look smart and perform in all the best places, people are always pleased to see you, and you play great music and cheer everyone up.

True? Well – up to a point. But life in the Band Service isn't all about ceremony and public adulation. Ask any trainee Bandie up to his or her eyes in mud and camouflage cream on a cold wet moor, and you'd get a very different story.

It's also about weeks at the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, learning every bootneck skill from living in the field to night patrolling, shooting, camouflage, and survival.

The first 15 weeks of the recruits' course do not even involve any music. Instead the training is a mirror image of what trainee Commandos get, delivered by the same instructors on the same training areas.

The reason is that life in the Royal Marines Band Service demands far more than musical talent and skills.

Since the official formation of the band service in 1905 the musicians have taken part in almost every operation involving the Royal Marines, from the two World Wars to the Falklands, the Gulf, Kosovo and Iraq.

They have worked as specialist drivers, radio operators, and casualty receiving specialists. In the Falklands they guarded prisoners of war, in the Iraqi desert they carried out casualty decontamination, and during the firemen's strikes they manned the Green Goddesses.

In April 2011 the CTC band deployed to Afghanistan, where Bandies worked in the Motor Transport Section, driving in combat logistic patrols to deliver supplies to forward operating bases.

They manned the ambulances in Camp Bastion and tended casualties – the traditional role of bandmen and women as 'stretcher-bearers' has evolved into 'casualty handlers,' a much more demanding role.

In November, Bandies from the Ambulance Response Troop led by Band Sergeant Matt Weites were honoured in the House of Lords for their work supporting the Joint Force Medical Group based at Camp Bastion.

As the Bandies took on a variety of essential tasks in support of 3 Commando Brigade, they had their musical instruments at the ready and played in everything from repatriation ceremonies to cheerful morale-boosting concerts for the troops.

IT IS difficult to think of any other job in the world which combines the military and the musical in a similar way.

When young musicians apply to join the Band Service it is made clear from the start that it's not all a life of musical practice and artistic interpretation.

"They are first and foremost a military band, with all the skills and disciplines that that implies," said WO2 Ross Hunt, troop commander who runs new entry recruit training at the Royal Marines School of Music.

He explained: "It's made very clear to them from the time they first apply that they are joining a military organisation."

"For the first 15 weeks after joining they do not practise, do not even pick up their instruments, but undergo essentially the same training as Commando recruits."

The young musicians who have passed the highly competitive entrance tests to the Royal Marines School of Music in Portsmouth arrive in September.

Like any bootneck recruit their first two weeks are spent doing 'phys' and learning all the basic skills from drill to washing and ironing.

For the first 15 weeks of training, there are no music lessons and no playing. For many of them, it will be the longest period in their lives that they haven't practised their instruments.

Instead it's a routine of early morning parades, runs, kit inspections and the 'Globe and Laurel'

routines familiar to all Royal Marine recruits – learning to fold their shirts and kit into the size of the *Globe and Laurel* magazine (a useful skill if they are going to live onboard a ship.)

"The routine is definitely a bit of a shock for some of them," said WO2 Hunt.

"When their parents come to Families' Day at the end of their third week, they often notice a change in their sons and daughters."

"All those things that they've probably told them for years to do – like tidying up their rooms – they are suddenly doing."

October 2011 saw the current intake of recruits at the Royal Marines School of Music move to Lympstone, as the first troop to spend the last ten weeks of military training at the Commando Training Centre.

They became the first troop to pass out from Lympstone when they completed Phase One military training on December 15.

"They used to train at Longmoor, in Hampshire, and this is the first time we've had everyone at Lympstone for ten weeks," said WO2 Hunt.

He explained: "It helps to cement a strong relationship between the band service and the rest of the Corps. It puts things into perspective with the recruits, who see other troops training for general service with the Royal Marines."

"And it works the other way, impressing upon the general recruits that the musicians are an integral part of the Corps."

The recruits spend a whole week learning how to shoot on the rifle range and another week learning communications, signals and voice procedure. They follow this up with a series of field exercises on the training area at Woodbury Common.

Here they are taught every traditional infantry skill from navigation to night patrols, checkpoint exercises, camouflage and concealment, living in bivouacs, crawling through tunnels of water, and the infamous 'wet and dry routine.'

This (not a particular favourite with the recruits, strangely enough) involves crawling through a stream until they are soaking wet, then a couple of hours later changing into dry clothes to get a warm night's sleep – then getting up in the morning and changing back into their wet clothes.

LEGEND has it there was a young musician once who enjoyed the field training so much he transferred to the Corps as a commando.

But it's fair to say most of the young recruits see these weeks of training as a means to an end, rather than enjoyable in themselves.

It helps that one of the five Royal Marine Bands is based at CTCRM Lympstone, and is on hand to provide inspiration if they get cast down by all the military training.

"Many of them listen to music in their accommodation, and they watched the Remembrance Day services with special interest," said section commander B/Cpl Charlotte Stus, one of the team of instructors.

She said: "They were keen to see the CTC band and it's good for them to keep that goal in mind, especially when things get tough."

Recruit Kerry McDougall, 19, from Gloucestershire, who joined as a bassoonist, was attracted by the opportunity to play sport as well as music.

She said: "I knew it would be quite tough military training because they made that clear to us at the audition."

"The training has made me feel fitter and I enjoy parts of it, although I didn't enjoy the wet and dry training. As long as you try your hardest you're OK."

"We're not expected to be as fit as Commandos, but you do develop a different attitude of mind – I feel that I have stopped being a civilian and everyone's motto is 'just get on with it.'"

Recruit Jack Williams, 17, from Bedford, who plays

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● Common objectives ...Camouflaged Bandies receive a briefing from their Corps brethren (above and above right) during field exercises on Woodbury Common and (right) the musicians demonstrate their marksmanship

nts of war

saxophone, clarinet and viola, is one of the youngest recruits (they range in age from 16 to 23) and quit his sixth form to join the Band Service.

He said: "I took a year out trying to find a job and when I came here it was a shock at the beginning.

"I wasn't used to it and struggled with the constant pressure and tests. We all want to play music and it's hard to get your head around this Commando training at first.

"But it's getting better. As it goes on you realise there is a point to it. Some parts are exciting, others are just hard work, but you're never bored, you're always focused and busy."

"You're doing the same thing every day and the friends you make are very close."

He added: "It has increased my confidence, it builds that into you. But I am looking forward to getting back to the school and getting back to music."

Recruit Sean Hodge, 22, from Plymouth, who joined as a bugler, has a music degree from Hertfordshire University.

He said: "Swapping life at university for this has been hard because I've been spoiled by student life. The military training has been a shock to me after being a student and I think the younger ones adapt better.

"But I enjoy it. The best bits are when things go badly and you make a bit of a joke out of it.

"The worst thing is the field training, doing all the admin in the field, where nothing's clean and you have to make it clean.

"There's a good team spirit and I enjoy being with the troop. I'm looking forward to the music training."

He added: "It was great to see the CTC band here – it's a reminder of why we are here and what we're aiming for."

Recruit Matthew Dixon, 21, from Ramsbury, in Wiltshire said: "I went to college, took three years out and thought I'd try to pursue a career in music, and this is the best place to do it.

"It's been a big change from my student life. You end up doing all this military training and don't always understand at first why things are done the way they are, but after a while you look at the bigger picture and you start to understand your role and the role of the band.

"There are lots of parts I haven't enjoyed but it's only while it's going on you don't enjoy it, afterwards you look back and think 'that wasn't too bad.'"

He added: "I'm more confident than when I joined and I'm really looking forward to playing. I've missed that from day one, but seeing the CTC band has been an inspiration."

He added: "The instructors definitely don't treat us exactly the same as commandos, we've been round the camp and seen how they're treated.

"The team are really good. They want us to pass but they do toughen us up. It's all character-building at the end of the day."

IF IT'S tough for the musicians to adapt, it also takes a change in mind-set on the part of the instructors.

The team is led by a colour sergeant, with three corporals who are section commanders, and a drill instructor and a PTI.

Apart from B/Cpl Charlotte Stus, the teachers have been used to training highly competitive, testosterone-charged male commando recruits. About a third of the school of music recruits are women.

C/Sgt Paul O'Gorman, the unit platoon weapon instructor who leads the team, said: "I've taught women before at Royal Navy establishments, but they've been more promotional and qualification courses, whereas here I'm instructing female civvies straight into the military regime."

Appealing to competitive instincts doesn't always work with Bandies, according to Cpl Ben Lovelace, the platoon weapon instructor responsible for teaching map-reading, weapons and field training.

He said: "One difference I notice is that you can't always keep them motivated through being competitive, because they're not as competitive as commando recruits.

"They are bonded as a team and tend to help each other out, especially the girls, and they definitely need a carrot, not a stick."

He added: "It's a real change from my last job, being at sea with 50 charged lads working on counter-piracy – it needs a different head.

"These people are very bright and I enjoy teaching them, it's a challenge.

"I find they pick up weapon drills really quickly, probably because they're musicians and they're used to reading something and putting it into practice."

All the instructors have been impressed by the intelligence of the group.

C/Sgt O'Gorman said: "I have been very impressed by their keenness and by the way they take in information. They'll take it on very quickly and at the end of any period they will ask good, structured questions. They're very quick to pick things up."

He added: "Do we treat them differently because they're musicians? Yes, we do look at the bigger picture and we can adjust things.

"There are scales of corrective punishment for instance, and where we might give a commando recruit that amount of press-ups, these recruits might only get that amount, so there are differences, but not huge differences."

He added: "I've trained five recruit troops before and as far as I'm concerned we're treating these ones pretty much the same, they get the same harshness when needed and the same chuck-ups and praise.

"It's the first time I've worked with the band and it's thoroughly enjoyable. They're great to work with, as long as you show you're keen and enthusiastic they'll be keen and enthusiastic about you."

THE musicians return to the Royal Marines School of Music in Portsmouth this month when their musical training begins in earnest.

It's a long course, the longest in the Corps, and most will not pass out as fully-fledged members of the Royal Marines Band Service until 2014.

They will spend hours a day practising their instruments, often learning a new instrument from scratch, and learning how to march and play at the same time – much harder than they make it look.

When they return to the school of music in Portsmouth, they will leave behind the most intensive phase of their military training – but their musical training is equally disciplined.

"When you think about it, juxtaposing military and musical ways of life may seem like an impossible task," said WO2 Hunt.

"The black-and-white approach of the military might seem incompatible with a musical career, as musicians bring qualities of emotion, expression and interpretation to their playing, and how can these qualities flourish alongside a rigid rank structure where orders have to be obeyed?"

He continued: "However, musical and military approaches to life are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

"You only have to look at the autocratic rule of many famous conductors to realise that they run their orchestras with an iron rod – or an iron baton perhaps.

"While they demand a military precision in the playing, there is still room for interpretation and emotion – in fact one finds the most incredible strains of emotion-filled music drifting from the most disciplined orchestras."

He added: "Modern attitudes towards military training do allow for freedom of thought. Indeed, recruits are encouraged to have their own views – of course, it's a case of knowing the right time to voice them!"



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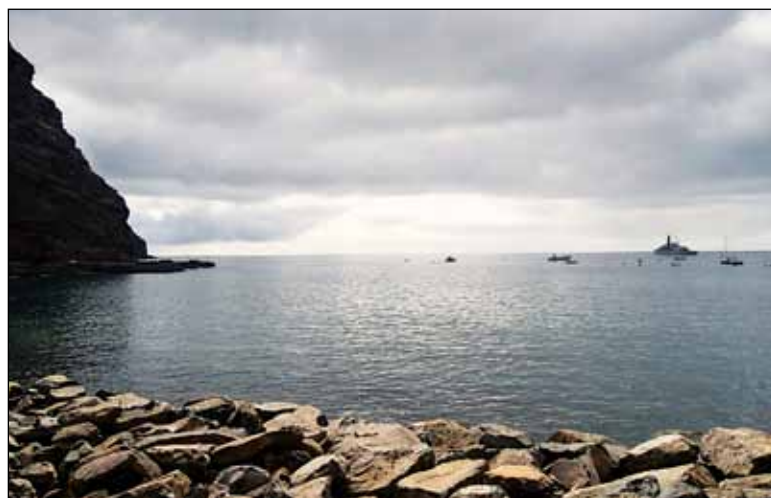
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Island hoppers

THE islands in question being Ascension and St Helena.

And doing the hopping? That would be Her Majesty's Ship Montrose.

The frigate hopes to visit all of Britain's overseas territories in the South Atlantic during her six-month deployment.

She clocked up two in under a week.

Of course, first you have to get there – which means crossing the Equator and paying homage at the court of King Neptune.

Aside from the age-old 'crossing the line' ceremony, the team in Montrose was keen to repeat a tradition established 12 months previously when she was chasing the pirate scourge around the Indian Ocean.

The ship wanted to present each soul aboard with a specially-commissioned certificate to mark the occasion – except that the generic certificates once sold by the old naval tailors in Portsmouth were no longer available, and the modern day computer generated versions offered instead didn't seem to compare to the elaborate, highly-decorated certificates depicting Neptune and his Court which had their heyday in the post-war Navy of the 1940s and 1950s.

Unable to find exactly what was required, it was decided that the only solution was for the ship to source a specific certificate just for the deployment.

Gosport artist Andrew Wing was commissioned and the result was a stunning piece of artwork based on an original design from the legendary cruiser HMS Belfast dating from 1945.

Twelve months on and with Montrose bound for a different ocean, Mr Wing set to work again; this year's has a distinctly cooler South Atlantic feel, featuring some of the different types of penguin and other native wildlife the frigate will encounter while deployed, as well as each of the locations she will visit over the coming months.

"Rather than issuing the ship's company with a computer-generated certificate from a colour printer, I wanted something they would be proud to take home as a souvenir not only of crossing the line but also of the deployment," said Cdr Jonathan Lett, the frigate's Commanding Officer.

"The fact that we have adapted a design previously used in HMS Belfast provides a rich seam of continuity and reflects the key role tradition still has to play in the modern Royal Navy."

Some 550 miles south of the invisible line encompassing the globe is one of the smallest of Britain's overseas outposts.

It is five years since a British warship last visited the volcanic island, little more than twice the size of Portsmouth and inhabited by no more than 900 souls.

The presence of Ascension's Wideawake Airfield (RAF Ascension) allowed the Devonport-based frigate to take on board personnel, some 600kg of essential spares and 16kg of mail.

With the Type 23 at anchor, groups from Two Boats School and 1st Ascension Island Scout Group came out by boat for tours of the ship.

Ashore, Cdr Lett called on the island's administrator – and Queen's representative, His Honour Colin Wells. Cdr Lett was joined on Ascension by 43 shipmates – although their brief visit to the island was rather more strenuous.

Led by Montrose's Executive Officer Lt Cdr Peter Laughton, they volunteered for the Dew Pond Run which sounds idyllic, but isn't.

The run snakes from the island's shore in Georgetown through the tropical vegetation of Green Mountain up to the Dew Pond at the top – a climb of 2,817ft over eight miles.

Forty of the runners reached the finish line, with

AB(Sea) Harris and AB (CIS) Maher coming joint first in a time of 1hr 25min, and ABs Wilson and Burge not far behind – despite having carried a 25kg Bergen the length of the course.

The event would not have been possible without the superb support of the local police and medics who were on hand to ensure it went smoothly; the race is normally only run twice a year but this was arranged especially for Montrose's visit.

"This is the second time I have undertaken the Dew Pond run; I was last here in 2006 with HMS Edinburgh," said Lt Cdr Laughton.

"This time we had almost double the number of runners and I am thrilled that such a large number of the ship's company rose to the challenge; it was another fantastic example of the Montrose spirit in action."

Back on board, up anchor and an 800-mile passage to Overseas Territory No.2, St Helena.

The last refuge of Napoleon (he was exiled there by a previous incarnation of Montrose's sister HMS Northumberland), the small island (slightly bigger than Bristol but with a population of a little over 4,000) has enjoyed visits from Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels in recent years – but it's been some time since the White Ensign flew in James Bay.

Even before 4,500 tonnes of battleship grey anchored off Jamestown, the first islanders were tasting what Montrose had to offer.

The ship's Lynx flew into the grounds of Prince Andrew School to allow Cdr Lett to call on Governor Mark Capes. That also gave the helicopter crew the perfect opportunity to show the students around the 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx – and provide a short but loud demonstration of what the Lynx can do.

Once Montrose herself was at anchor off Jamestown, she welcomed a number of islanders on board for tours, ranging from 1st Jamestown Scouts through to the New Horizons Youth Group.

Cdr Lett also hosted Mr Capes and other leading figures of the island community for lunch.

Throughout the visit, the ship's company was equally busy ashore. Thanks to New Horizons, they enjoyed a number of sporting fixtures including a keenly-contested football match (the ship was edged out 4-3) and game of cricket (also won by the locals).

On the final day, the ship's netball team achieved a resounding victory over a local side, winning 66-7.

A number of the more intrepid Montrosers also played the famous St Helena Golf Course, while others took advantage of the opportunity to take part in diving, sea-kayaking and exploring the unique environment the island has to offer.

And feeding their desire to rise to every challenge in every port – and having only just recovered from the Dew Pond Run on Ascension – a large proportion of the ship's company climbed the imposing 699 steps of Jacob's Ladder.

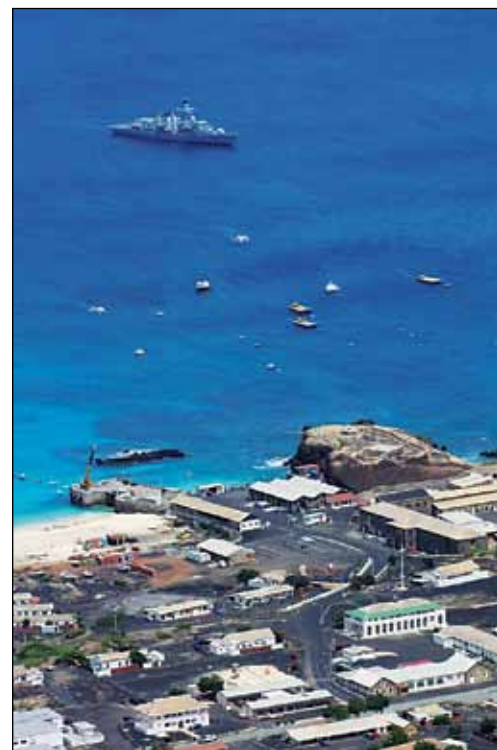
The steps rise 600ft out of Jamestown to Ladder Hill Fort which looms over the capital and offers spectacular views over the town, James Bay and beyond.

"I am delighted that we have been able to engage with the people of St Helena at virtually every level from the Governor to younger members of the island's community," said Cdr Lett.

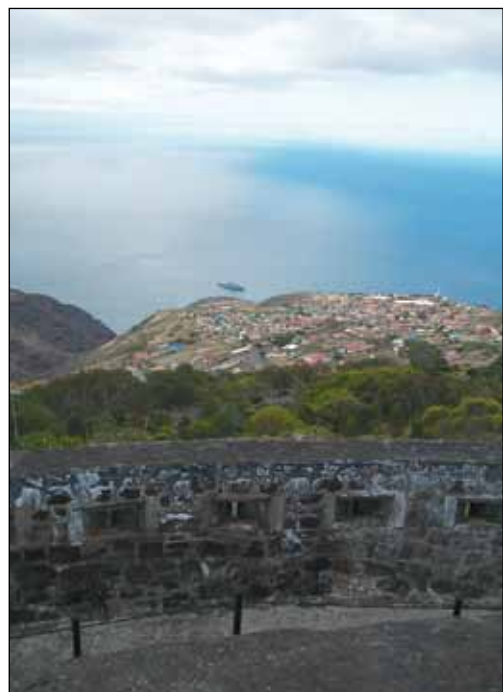
"I hope that we have been able to give people an insight into Montrose's mission in the South Atlantic, reassuring them that we will be here promoting British interests over the coming months.

"It's always been my aspiration to visit every one of the British Overseas Territories in the South Atlantic Ocean during the course of this deployment."

Just Tristan da Cunha, the Falklands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands to go then...



● (Clockwise from above) Sailors climb Jacob's Ladder on St Helena; Napoleon keeps watch over Jamestown; HMS Montrose in James Bay; the frigate's captain Cdr Lett receives a dunking at the Court of King Neptune; the specially-commissioned crossing the line certificate; Montrose in the azure waters off Georgetown, Ascension Island; runners unfurl the White Ensign during the Dew Pond race; St Helena youngsters and local firefighters inspect the ship's Lynx; Montrose as seen from Ladder Hill Fort guarding Jamestown; and the ship's Lynx on Ascension's 'helipad'



Picture: Lockheed Martin



Number 1 Lightning II

THIS is Britain's first next-generation jet – the blistering punch of the Royal Navy's future aircraft carriers – rolling out of the factory.

The F35 Lightning II, which will be flown by Fleet Air Arm and Royal Air Force aviators, will provide the strike for the largest ships ever to fly the White Ensign, HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, from the end of this decade.

Before there can be any thought of flying the F35 – also known as the Joint Strike Fighter – from the 65,000-tonne leviathans or land bases, however, years of testing and evaluation are required.

To that end, trials variants of the Lightning II are needed – and this one (complete with 'interesting' colour scheme...) is Britain's first, designated BK-1.

It rolled out of the factory gates at Lockheed Martin's giant Forth Worth complex in Texas ahead of various checks and ground tests before it takes to the skies.

The stealthy F35 is capable of reaching more than one and a half times the speed of sound, carrying twice the payload of a Harrier and

gives the pilot an unparalleled view of the airspace around him thanks to sensors and cutting-edge technology.

The first British Lightning is the short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) version of the jet, the F35B, in line with the UK's original requirements.

Following last year's Strategic Defence and Security Review, however, the MOD plumped for a traditional carrier version of the Joint Strike Fighter, the F35C, which will be launched by catapult and caught on the deck as it lands using arrestor wires.

The combat and mission systems of the 'jump jet' version of the F35 are all but identical, so British aviators will be using BK-1 as a crucial learning experience – not least as the UK's first F35C won't be ready for testing for a few years.

The F35 is classed as the world's first 'fifth generation' jet fighter – the Gloster Meteor and Messerschmitt 262 were first, the Harrier third, while the RAF's Typhoons are fourth generation – thanks to its advanced stealth technology and combat systems (among its key features is the ability for aircraft to 'share' information – a pilot can see

everything his wingman can see).

Such leaps in technology mean there's a lot for air and ground crew to learn about the Lightning II – and getting to grips with BK-1 which, in the words of Capt Dickie Payne, Deputy Assistant Chief-of-Staff Carrier Strike, "represents the first step in re-generating the UK's carrier strike capability".

Lt Matt Fooks-Bale, a former Harrier pilot and weapons instructor now on the carrier strike staff at Fleet Headquarters, added: "The sooner we get involved in testing, the better.

"It's important to learn how to 'fight' the F35, how to develop tactics. In a Harrier you would spend half your time simply flying the aircraft. That's not the case on the F35.

"Getting our hands on BK-1 means we should be at the top of our game when the F35C is delivered, having had time to learn about the aircraft."

The first naval pilot is due to fly BK-1 in the spring of 2013 and, from the end of that year, the JSF team will begin developing the tactics which front-line squadrons will use when the jet enters service with the Fleet Air Arm and RAF in 2018.

"This is a particularly exciting time

for the UK Carrier Strike project and for the Royal Navy's return to fixed wing flying from the sea, post the demise of the Harrier," said Capt Jock Alexander, Carrier Strike and Aviation advisor on the Naval Staff.

"The Joint Strike Fighter will be operated in a joint force with the Royal Air Force and young pilots joining the Royal Navy today can look forward to operating this world-beating aircraft from the deck of the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers."

Group Captain Harv Smyth, the UK's Joint Strike Fighter national deputy, added: "This is a major milestone in the JSF programme for the UK – and we look forward to starting to operate the first British F-35s next year.

"The JSF is ideally suited to the UK's future combat air capability needs, since it provides a world-class fifth-generation air system, which is capable of operating from both the land and our new Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier."

Although the fighter is built by Lockheed in the US, Britain's BAE Systems is heavily involved in the project providing its expertise on jump jet technology, manufacturing, flight testing and systems.

Five on a hike together...



AS BONKERS challenges go, these are right up there with *I'm A Celebrity*.

Appear on local TV or radio, enjoy a cup of tea with a mayor, play the bagpipes whilst wearing a kilt, tour a distillery, oh, and travel 250 miles without a penny to your name for food or accommodation.

Five sailors from HMS Bulwark were dumped (there's not really any other word for it) at the tip of Scotland and given 48 hours to get to Faslane in a bid to test their teamwork and resourcefulness.

The 'Captain's Highland Challenge' was sprung on the quintet – Lt Mark 'Rio' Grandy, OC Markus Adcock, LS(EW) Darren 'Crash' Evans, LS(AWT) Jason 'Smudge' Smith and LET(ME) Chris 'Doug' Dugdale – as the flagship conducted training around Loch Eriboll, that's just a dozen miles from Cape Wrath... and a long way from civilisation.

With very short notice and limited resources, the team was put ashore by landing craft as the sun rose over the north coast of Scotland on a cold Friday morning about eight miles from the village of Durness with instructions to rejoin their ship 48 hours later when it arrived at HMNB Clyde.

The assault ship's Commanding Officer Capt Alex Burton also set the five those rather varied challenges.

By the end of the first day, the sailors had blagged and bluffed their way to Inverness – 104 miles away – thanks to a little help from locals, tourists and a friendly train conductor.

In the capital of the Highlands, the sailors used a ship's badge and photograph to get a free night's sleep in a hotel, and fulfilled one of Capt Burton's demands: to appear on local media (Moray Firth Radio – 'The North's No.1' obliged).

South of Inverness, the five hopped off the train at Dalwhinnie for a tour of the village's distillery and, as the eventful journey continued, they enjoyed tea (dressed in No.1s) with a provost, clambered on to a shire horse and LS Evans replaced trousers for a kilt, then picked up the bagpipes for a quick skirl.

"We would not have been able to achieve the level of success without the generosity and helpfulness of the people of Inverness, especially the staff of the Ramada Encore Hotel who went above and beyond our expectations in preventing us from having to sleep rough and also Scot Rail who made most of the travel possible," said LS Smith.

He and his shipmates reached Faslane in time – with photographic evidence as proof of their exploits, plus several gifts for Capt Burton to boot; the flagship's CO was impressed by the initiative they showed.

"I am extremely proud of the resourcefulness these members of my ship's company have displayed in succeeding not only in getting back safely on time, but also in achieving all their objectives along the way," he added.

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A FORCE FOR GOOD



Dentists have cake but hold the fillings

IT'S not every day a dentist urges you to eat more sweets, but it was all in a good cause for staff from HM Naval Base Clyde.

The dentists and their staff set up a tent outside the medical centre and sold home-made cakes and a selection of sweet treats donated by local shops and bakers.

The day was a huge success, pulling in passing sailors and base staff who were on their way to lunch.

The cake bake raised £1,290 for two charities, Meningitis Association Scotland, and the Vale

of Leven Hospital Cancer Unit.

Karlyn Marshall, dental receptionist at the medical centre, said: "We are aware of the fantastic work which both the organisations do and wanted to come up with a way to help them out by raising cash.

"We thought that setting up a tent outside our Medical Centre with the cakes and goodies was a good way to capture as many people as possible.

"This is just the start of our fundraising and hopefully we can gather a lot more money for these two causes."

Jim makes it into the record books

NOW here's a thought to make you breathless, how about running a half marathon? No sweat? How about running a half-marathon wearing a respirator?

Not only has it been done, but there is an official place in the Guinness Book of World Records for it – a place now proudly held by helicopter instructor Lieutenant Jim Fraser, from 660 Squadron at RAF Shawbury.

Jim achieved a time of one hour 51 minutes and 31 seconds, breaking the previous record of two hours 36 minutes and 59 seconds set by Christopher Filipowski at the Brooklyn Half Marathon.

Jim said: "You see so many people asking for sponsorship money but I wanted to do something different, something that would catch people's eyes.

"I hoped they would recognise how difficult running the distance in a respirator would be, and be more inclined to part with their hard-earned cash."

Jim, who has piloted Lynx helicopters on several counter-drug and disaster relief deployments, wore the respirator which is issued to all military personnel in case of biological or chemical attack.

He said: "It was horribly uncomfortable to wear. The first few miles were OK, but I started to feel dizzy after mile eight, I could not feel my legs after nine, and when I got to ten I thought I would pass out.

"I found it really hard to breathe but I just kept ploughing on to the end."

Jim's efforts raised £1,200 for Help for Heroes.

Naval Base Guards help children's hospice

MEMBERS of the MOD Guard Service's Yellow Watch at Clyde Naval Base have been garnering support from local businesses to support a charity raffle in aid of the Children's Hospice Association Scotland.

Steve Pursley, John McDermid, Elizabeth McArthur, Karen Kelly and Ruth Duff have been using their spare time to get out and about in their community persuading businesses to support and donate prizes.

More than 100 businesses contributed, which meant that the Robin House raffle had 107 prizes to offer. Among the goodies to be raffled were a Samsung Digital Camcorder, an iPod docking station and a huge selection of vouchers for everything from meals to beauty treatments.

Steve Pursley said: "We used our time off to visit a number of businesses and the response was brilliant. Robin House is such a great cause that everyone really got behind what we were doing and dug deep to contribute.

"Once we had the prizes Yellow Watch then took to the naval base and surrounding areas, rattling the buckets and selling as many tickets as we could.

"As a result we've raised £2,000 for the hospice, with money still coming in."

Moustachioed Movember

THE MEN of HMS Sutherland have thrown aside their shaving gear in aid of the men's health charity Movember.

Sutherland's LPT 'Ronnie' Barker said: "During November each year, Movember is responsible for the sprouting of moustaches on thousands of men's faces in the UK and around the world – the aim of which is to raise vital funds and awareness for men's health, specifically prostate cancer and other cancers that affect men."

He adds: "I have attached a photo of the ship's efforts – and you will see some gash tashes and some good tashes."

We'll leave the conclusion of which are good and which are gash to your discretion...

● **Movember strikes on board HMS Sutherland**



Ships see pink...

THE FRIGATES of the Royal Navy seem to have been blushing pink lately...

Whilst busy conducting security patrols in the Gulf of Aden, HMS Somerset's sailors found time in their keep-fit training to don some vibrant colour in aid of breast cancer charities.

Somerset's sailors, aviators and marines embarked on a mission to collectively cover the distance from Plymouth to the Seychelles.

This adds up to a distance of 5,155.3 miles, which called upon the crew to run, cycle, row or cross-train for two miles each day.

An impressive 122 members of Somerset's crew took part in the event with each participant donating a minimum of £5.

This followed on from their blue month in September when the team raised awareness of male cancers with health promotion clinics and Blue Friday circuit training and zumba sessions.

The frigate's efforts raised £946.40 for Cancer Research UK.

Somerset's Commanding Officer Cdr Paul Bristowe said: "Whether conducting boarding operations, working in engine rooms or maintaining equipment on the upper deck, we are currently working in high temperatures for prolonged periods.

"Somerset's crew must not only



remain functional, but be able to respond to the physical demands of operational tasking or ship's emergencies.

"This requires a high level of personal fitness, and I am delighted that so many of the team have taken the opportunity to combine their fitness routines with raising funds for such good causes as cancer research and awareness."

Somerset wasn't the only Type 23 to mark the pinkness of cancer research.

HMS St Alban's sailors took up the challenge of the Race for Life – which in their case was a 5km dash 22 times around the upper deck.

Seventy-two members of the ship's company (pictured above) mustered on the flight deck to

clock up the 5km distance.

Everyone appeared in fancy dress with a pink theme. The pre-challenge warm-up was an aerobics session run by LPT Andrea Marshall.

Many of the crew ran the 5km distance, although a few chose to add a bit more challenge – by skipping, piggybacking, three-legged races and the occasional sedate walk.

LPT Marshall said: "A special mention must go to our 'green' boarding team who while on the way round as a squad donned an additional piece of kit for each lap – to the point where they were running in full camouflage, crowd control equipment and carrying weapons."

The ship's company raised £632.11 for the days event.



...and brew up for SSAFA

SAILORS in HMS St Albans found time in their busy programme of counter-narcotics and maritime security operations in the Gulf to take part in SSAFA's annual Big Brew Up.

The event was held on her flight deck, where the space usually held by the imposing bulk of the Merlin helicopter was instead occupied by sailors scoffing scones, Chelsea buns, banana cake, Victoria sponge and Black Forest gâteau, all of course

washed down with copious cups of tea.

Lt Freddie Hurley, who organised the event, said: "I cannot thank the galley team enough for all the work they put in preparing the cakes for this event, particularly Chef Brown for lending me his favourite Union Jack apron!"

The big brew raised £219 for SSAFA.

Also raising money for SSAFA were staff from HMS

Collingwood, who held their Big Brew Up in the Maritime Warfare School.

WO Rosie Dodd, who organised the event, said: "It was great to hand a cheque for £170 to Norman Young from SSAFA, I'd like to thank everyone involved, especially those who baked the calorific delights."

Erica Clark baked a teapot-shaped cake which was won by her line manager, Ian Freegard, after he correctly guessed its weight.



Offbeat glamour for RNRMC

FOR anyone who thought that fashion was a load of old rubbish – well, in this case you're absolutely right...

Liz Ridgway (top) of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity took to the catwalk at the Dumpster Design fashion show.

The fashion line specialise in dresses made from recycled or unusual materials; in Liz's case she was clad in a dress made entirely of RNRMC campaign leaflets.

She said: "It was scarily fun walking out on stage.

"I wanted to raise money doing something different and wearing a dress made out of paper in front of hundreds of people seemed like a good way to do it."

Liz raised £1,000 for the Naval charity with her fashion parade.

Find out more online at dumpster.design.co.uk or www.rnrmc.org.uk.

Open day boon

COLLINGWOOD Open Day 2011 has benefitted local charities including: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance; Hampshire Constabulary Welfare Fund; HMS Collingwood Forces Families Club; HMS Collingwood Volunteer Cadet Corps; Mayor of Fareham's Charity Appeal; Rainbow Centre; Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity; Rowan's Hospice; Solent MS Therapies Centre, Portsmouth; Seafarers UK; St Mary's Church, Rowner.

The June Open Day is an annual event, attracting thousands of people to the Fareham training establishment who enjoy a variety of attractions and the spectacle of the Field Gun Competition.

The Mayor of Fareham, Cllr Trevor Cartwright, thanked the Commodore and staff of HMS Collingwood on behalf of the charities.

Raleigh is all wrapped up

SAILORS from HMS Raleigh joined with volunteers to wrap up 1,200 Christmas presents for disadvantaged children.

Chicks, a charity which provides free respite breaks for children all over the UK, sent out a call for help, and the Raleigh sailors joined other volunteers at the charity's retreat near Tavistock.

In 2011, 1,200 children enjoyed a six-day break at the site in Cornwall or at the charity's other retreat near Tavistock.

Each one will receive a Christmas present wrapped by the volunteers.

LPT George 'Shiner' Wright organised the sailors' involvement; he said: "Sailors are a generous bunch at heart and we are always keen to support a worthy cause."

"I have a young daughter, who last year spent Christmas in hospital suffering from bronchitis."

"Megan was only three months old at the time and sitting in the hospital with her made me want to do my bit for children who, for whatever reason, don't get what we would think of as a normal Christmas."



● LPT Shiner Wright and WO Chris Robinson with (foreground) AB James Homer, Stacey Le-Poidevin, Simon Taylor and Karl Meckaniuk
Picture: Dave Sherfield

John and friends scale the heights

SERIAL fund-raiser Lt Cdr John Scivier has scaled the dizzy heights again.

Not content with climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in 2010, he has returned from Nepal where he completed a 75-mile trek to Mount Everest Base Camp in aid of Help for Heroes.

John was keen to take on an even bigger challenge this time, and whilst the height of the base camp at 17,500ft is not quite as high as the African mountain, the terrain and much longer time spent at high altitude made for a much more difficult trip.

Blighted with altitude-related headaches and a four-day spell of stomach cramps and 'Nepal belly,' John and the team of 26 volunteer trekkers finally reached base camp.

Along with the group were two injured servicemen who have both undergone extensive treatment at Headley Court.

Cpl John le Galloudec was shot in the spine in Iraq and has very little feeling below the knees, and Sgt Darren Carew had major reconstructive surgery on his foot after his vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

Both men were a huge inspiration for John and the group.

"The altitude and particularly the illness that struck us all at some point made life very interesting, at times you were running on empty but just to see Darren and John ploughing on, with smiles on their faces despite obvious pain, was a humbling and very motivating sight," said John.

John has raised more than £5,200 on this trek and well over £13,000 for Help for Heroes when combined with his Kilimanjaro climb last year.

To contribute, visit his website: www.justgiving.com/JohnScivier-EverestBaseCamp2011

Pirates of the Cornish Caribbean

SAILORS and staff at HMS Raleigh were persuaded to part with their cash by two marauding pirates in search of treasure for Children in Need.

Rumoured to be sent by Blackbeard himself, the buccaneers toured the Navy's training base in Torpoint rattling a collection bucket.

The dastardly duo, alias PO 'Maddie' Maddocks and 'Nobby' Nobes, normally work as instructors within Raleigh's seamanship training unit.

Maddie said: "We've been persuading me hearties to part with their treasure by cutlass and musket."

"Shiver me timbers, sailors are always very generous and this is a really good cause."



● Dental Nurse Lawrence Miller handed over his cash to pirates PO Maddie Maddocks and PO Nobby Nobes

SPVA hub for charities

IF YOU work for a charity or organisation that provides support and advice to veterans, the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency is developing a new charity hub on its website (www.veterans-uk.info).

In the most recent SPVA podcast, Karen Awere from the Communications Team is interviewed about the Hub's development. She said: "Our website has an average of 50,000 visitors per month so this should give you an idea of how many people could find out about your services and how you support veterans."

"Take a listen to the podcast to find out why you should get involved and then contact us to be added to the Hub."

Find out more at the Veterans-UK website.

Commando 999 success

A TEAM of more than 100 former Royal Marine Commandos completed the Commando 999 26-mile course through central London.

The 100 men, who now all work in the UK's emergency services, were met at the end by the Royal Marines Corps of Drums at Waterloo Place, where they paraded down the Mall to the Royal Marines National Memorial.

Former Marine and Commando 999 founder Chief Inspector Mark Scoular said: "Commando 999 was set up to bring together the former Royal Marines who now serve in the civic forces."

"It is incredible to see just how many of them are standing up and being counted when it really matters."

"Saturday's speedmarch, one of only a few annual fundraising events, will raise close to £75,000 of much needed support for the Royal Marines Association."

Hampshire welcomes heroes

HAMPSHIRE has become the latest county to join the UK's growing 'Heroes Welcome' scheme which pledges support to servicemen and women.

The scheme provides a free and simple method for businesses, shops, restaurants, cafes, hotels, taxis and many other businesses to show their support, perhaps by offering a discount or special service.

Hampshire has a wider range of military facilities than any other county in the UK with about 22,000 serving personnel stationed within its boundaries.



Stretcher bearers pound the pavements

SAILORS from Clyde naval base held a 24-hour sponsored stretcher run which saw them pounding the pavements of the naval base carrying a 15 stone man-overboard dummy.

Members of the Clyde Logistics Organisation fielded ten teams of five, taking turns to lug the stretcher the length of the naval base and back continuously.

CPO Caterer Dave Pitt explained: "We wanted to do something to raise money for the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association (BLESMA) and thought that a 24-hour stretcher run would be challenging."

"The dummy weighed around 15 stones, so after

a while it began to hurt, but our biggest challenge was probably the weather – we had everything in that 24-hour period from driving rain and hail to thunder."

Joining the Clyde Logistics Organisation were teams from the Career Management Cell, the Waterfront Manning Office, and the Managing Director of Babcock Clyde, Mark Dixon.

The gruelling event was a huge success with the team raising £3,000 for the charity, with donations still coming in.

If you'd like to support their efforts, visit the CLO's Just Giving website at www.justgiving.com/CLOStretcherCarrying

British Lung Foundation Burrow Hill Training Fund

The British Lung Foundation (BLF) is pleased to announce availability of the 'Burrow Hill Training Fund'. Under this scheme, funding is available to support vocational training, healthcare professional training and medical research related to ex-members of the Armed Forces of the Crown and their dependents who are suffering from any disease of the chest. The following 3 grant types will be offered:

1. Vocational Training

Grants to provide assistance with vocational training for ex-members of the Armed Forces of the Crown and their dependents who are suffering from any disease of the chest or related illnesses. This could cover any type of vocational training.

Amount per award: Up to £1,000

2. Healthcare Professional Training

Grants to assist in advancing the education of persons training to be healthcare professionals specializing in the treatment of chest diseases with a preference for those working with or intending to work with members or ex-members of the Armed Forces of the Crown. This might include training such as specialist nursing qualifications etc.

Amount per award: £2,000

3. Research Grants

Grants to fund medical research into the causes and treatment of chest diseases, in particular amongst members or ex-members of the Armed Forces of the Crown.

Amount per award: £50k per Grant

For further information and to make an application, please see the 'Research > Grants available and how to apply' page of the BLF website: www.lunguk.org



British Lung Foundation

A spell in the

WELCOME to the University of Merlin.

Nothing to do with Hogwarts, Discworld or any other wizard-related tomfoolery (*a seam deeply mined by our Puns Editor – Ed*).

This is a shining example of joined-up thinking – a squadron which integrates the training of its aircrew and engineers before sending them out of the door to an operational unit – and is now leading the Royal Navy into a new age of Merlin.

And the Commanding Officer of 824 NAS, Cdr Gavin Richardson, says Merlin capability starts at their front door.

The front door in question is the modest entrance to the massive MTF, or Merlin Training Facility – the aforementioned University of Merlin.

The key to its success lies in the structure of the courses – but that is not the most eye-catching facet.

That honour lies with the training aids, a far too modest term for some serious kit.

Top of the list is the Cockpit Dynamic Simulator (CDS) – and my chance to get my hands on “the most expensive xBox in the world,” as one member of the

MIKE GRAY takes a turn in a seat of learning at RN Air Station Culdrose and sees how 824 Naval Air Squadron trains aircrew and engineers for the Merlin fleet

squadron described it.

Housed in a vast chamber and looking like a Martian tripod from the War of the Worlds, trainees enter the simulator across a lofty bridge.

I was introduced to my pilot for the next 45 minutes or so, simulator instructor Lt Craig Howe, and clambered into the right-hand seat, from which the real aircraft is normally flown.

As we fastened our harnesses, Lt Cdr Gary Jagers, Officer-in-Charge of the MTF, sat behind us to help run the simulation. With the engine noise

turned down to allow us to hear each other – the roar adds to the realism – Lt Howe pointed out of the virtual windscreen.

“Do you see that large grey box-like building? That is where we are right now...”

The officer cranked up the engines and we began to taxi away from where we were (and where we still were, if you follow me), the cockpit bumping gently as our make-believe Merlin crossed the joins in the virtual concrete apron.

We took off from Runway 12 and although the view from the cockpit is not photo-realistic, it was good enough for me to gaze out and enjoy the view of the air station as we banked to the south-west and headed out to sea.

The simulator, like the real aircraft, requires light handling, and does not particularly like sudden, violent movements.

“We start pilot training on a light aircraft, which needs a light touch, and the first helicopter we fly – the Squirrel – is the same,” said Lt Howe.

“So by the time we get to the heavier helicopters, any heavy-handedness should be beaten out of us.”

Lt Cdr Jagers said: “Fundamental to crew training is the deck landing, and as you will see, this is ideal practice.”

First stop was RFA Argus, and – as with the rest of the simulator – the level of accuracy was impressive.

“Most UK airfields are represented on the simulator, but the ones we use more often are modelled to a better level than the

others,” said Lt Cdr Jagers.

“Worldwide we can do the Falklands, Gibraltar – the ones we are likely to come across.

“But certainly we have got all the UK military airfields.

“And it is amazing how quickly you forget you are in a simulator...”

Argus steamed into view below us and Lt Howe banked the simulator steeply to approach upwind. I clung on to the seat as the visual and physical signals suggested we were moving a great deal more than we actually were.

Argus looked good – her paintwork and hull were completely unblemished by the cyber elements – but the layout of her deck was bang up-to-date.

In-house technical staff keep a close eye on what is going on with a ship; in the case of Argus, there were some green-edged boxes on the deck which are fairly new – the simulated Argus had been remodelled to mimic the real ship, including recently-changed deck markings.

Lt Howe landed us safely on her flight deck despite the fact he was in the ‘wrong’ seat, using the simple maxim ‘get it doing what you want and keep it there till you need to change (ie use the controls as little as possible).

Then it was my turn – my first launch from the flight deck of a moving ship.

It was untidy, it was uncontrolled and it was nerve-racking but we lifted off (though not steadily nor vertically), so I suppose that counts as a success.

Next we moved on to HMS Iron Duke, taking a close look at a Russian Akula-class submarine which was cruising just south of the Lizard in our exercise area.

As we descended the sea was ruffled by the heavy downdraft from our virtual Merlin.

As we approached Iron Duke we had to hold off; a computer-generated Flight Deck Officer waved off a Lynx before marshalling us in.

“The Type 23 is a lot closer to the water than Argus – the flight deck is about 16ft off the sea, as opposed to 46-48ft with Argus,” said Lt Howe, who wryly describes himself as a simulator display pilot.

“It is much more intimate – everything is much closer, but the procedure is the same.

“The Type 23 is really challenging for young pilots.”

Our final visit was to HMS Dauntless, which was wallowing in a big sea; Lt Howe showed what happens when it all goes wrong, leaving us bobbing upside-down in the wake of the destroyer.

It took a couple of keystrokes to set the situation right, and although students learn from their mistakes, instructors are careful not to put them in too many tight spots.

“We have to be careful we do not shake a young pilot’s – or anyone’s for that matter – confidence,” said Lt Cdr Jagers. “Not too much terror...”

Lt Howe said landing is a simple matter really – just putting the machine down on the ‘bum line’ – a mark on the deck which correlates with the pilot’s seat in the helicopter.

The CDS also hinted at the real aircraft’s sophistication.

“You can preset speed, height and target co-ordinates, and the aircraft follows the computed course into a steady hover – you



Picture: LA(Phot) Bernie Henesy



Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones



● Anticlockwise from top right: the hydraulically-operated Cockpit Dynamic Simulator; a Merlin from 824 Naval Air Squadron lifts off at Culdrose; a Merlin on the ground at 824 NAS headquarters in Culdrose; a session in one of the MTF's Rear Crew Trainers, with students working on the radar and sonar aspects of a simulated mission; air engineers – graduates of 824 Naval Air Squadron – work on a Merlin aboard HMS Illustrious during operational sea training at the end of last year; the Weapon Systems Trainer (WST) – or ‘Merlin Cabriolet’ – in the MTF where trainee engineers can work on the helicopter’s undercarriage, weapon mechanisms and sonar; the Merlin Mechanical Systems Trainer (MST), where students can get to grips with the Merlin engine and rotor assembly; (above) Merlins of 824 NAS taxi at Culdrose during the squadron’s Families Day in the summer, when kith and kin of squadron members are invited in to see the work of the unit



e cockpit

let it fly itself,” said Lt Cdr Jaggers.

“In the real aircraft we would keep our hands on the controls in case something goes wrong.”

Simulation in the world of Merlins is nothing new – aircrew and engineers have been training this way for the best part of a decade.

And one real benefit of the simulation is the saving of time – instead of making Merlin fly simulator miles to reach a submarine, it is easier and quicker to move the submarine to the Merlin.

Back in the real world of the MTF there were other simulators to see – maybe not quite as eye-catching, but every bit as important to the training process.

Two cabins house Rear Crew Trainers (RCTs), where trainee aircrew can get to grips with the electronic kit found behind the cockpit of a Merlin.

It is a simple task to link the displays of the RCTs to the CDS, allowing a full simulated mission despite the fact the students are in different parts of the building.

Whatever the pilot can see (or cannot see if it is dark or murky) from the cockpit is reproduced exactly in radar or sonar form.

And while the pilots invariably grab the limelight, the folk in the back working on the screens are trained to be peerless operators of sophisticated sonics and sonar equipment which are critical to the success of anti-submarine operations.

For the pilots there is also a Cockpit Procedural Trainer (CPT) which does not have the visuals and motion of the CDS but allows students to go through cockpit drills using exactly the same controls, switches, buttons and displays as they will use in the real thing.

Merlin normally flies with a three-strong crew – a single pilot, an observer (basically an airborne Principal Warfare Officer) and an aircrewman; the first two are officers, the latter an NCO.

Although the 13-month aircrew courses are in the minority at the MTF, they last longer and absorb most training resources; the fact that they are split 65:35 in favour of simulated training gives some indication as to the savings made in terms of air time, fuel costs and the fact that training is much less weather-dependent than before the advent of such accurate simulations.

The second, and more populous, training stream is that of the air engineers, and they have their own Merlins to play with.

In a curriculum moving towards computer-aided training – similar to computer-based training, but with an instructor present to ease them along at their own pace – the fledgling engineers start in a series of educational suites on the ground floor – the MTF has an in-house network of 14 servers, 83 workstations and 33 laptops.

They move from theory to Part Task Trainers, where a student's

computerised lesson prompts him or her to press a button or flick a switch to achieve an effect, which the student does on a real piece of kit linked to the network.

When ready they move on to the Mechanical Systems Trainer (MST).

The trainer is based on the upper part of the aircraft; it has rotors (although the blades are stubs), full transmission and hydraulic machinery, and myriad faults can be programmed in by instructors for trainees to tackle.

It is configured exactly the same as the real Merlin, and students can even practise changing engines as if in the confined space of a Type 23 frigate using a Hoist Boom Assembly.

Next door is the Weapon Systems Trainer (WST) – “the Merlin Cabriolet,” as Lt Cdr Jaggers describes it, as it is simply the lower part of the aircraft.

“This is used to train on weapons, the undercarriage, sonar, the deck grab and so on,” said Lt Cdr Jaggers.

“We can practise loading and unloading, and with the Mk 2 Merlin we can do the machine gun as well as the depth charges and Stingray torpedo.”

Students gradually build up skill and experience at working on the equipment, whether in normal light or in degrees of darkness, gaining confidence in their abilities as they progress.

And the fact they are working on virtually the real thing means different courses can come in and share the same kit, whether aircrew or engineers.

WO2 Chris Pugh said: “We have got the best training rig here.

“We basically train AETs all the way to COs designate. We do initial aircraft training – we are one big combined unit, and it all works very well.”

Interest in the world of Merlins extends beyond the Naval Service – WO Pugh said there is an NCO from the Parachute Regiment on the squadron's books.

“He has done about six tours in Afghanistan, but he is now training and will join the Royal Navy,” said WO Pugh.

“He doesn't want to be Jungle, though – he has spent his life being shot at, so he wants to do anti-submarine warfare.”

The foundation stone of the MTF was laid in 1998 and the building opened for business ten years ago as a cutting-edge training centre with a price tag of £150 million.

But now Merlin Mk 2 is approaching fast, and with 824 Squadron in the vanguard of the transition, upgrading is required – something in the order of £65 million.

The airframe and primary flying controls on the new aircraft will be largely unchanged, but the cockpit, avionics and mission systems are extensively modified.

“The current equipment is now old technology,” said Lt Cdr Jaggers.

“There is going to be big investment in the simulator, which will be like going from a 486 chip to a Pentium Plus.

“We will be able to upgrade, plug and play to a far greater extent than before.”

The guts will be ripped out of the various boxes and cabins by Canadian firm CAE, a world leader in simulator technology, and new kit installed.

The CPT was due to be taken offline for upgrading on the last day of 2011, with one of the RCTs following at the end of this month and the CDS in March.

The MST switch starts in April and the WST in August – the same month in which Mk 2 training really kicks in – although the squadron will also be keeping Mk 1 training ticking over until the change of aircraft is complete.

Most of the simulator equipment will be superficially similar, although the Martian-style CDS will end up looking more like a Dalek, according to Lt Cdr Jaggers – electric motors will move the device instead of spindly hydraulic legs.

“Our engineers are already working on the Mk 2 at Yeovil – they are a year ahead of the aircrew,” said Lt Cdr Jaggers, adding that the squadron's training output for both aircrew (before the Mk 2 surge) and engineering (post-Harrier) is at the highest rate since the aircraft's introduction to service a decade ago.

Of course, there comes a time when the trainees get the chance to test themselves in the real world, and across the road from the MTF is 824 Squadron's headquarters – and a clutch of genuine, solid, three-dimensional Merlin helicopters.

For most trainees, the transition is practically seamless.

And they do not leave the University of Merlin with just a set of deep military skills.

In partnership with the Open University, successful officers passing through 824 achieve a foundation degree in Military Aviation Studies, whilst aircrew obtain a City and Guilds Level 3 Diploma.

The training facility is set up to provide in excess of 20,000 student training hours each year, from ab-initio to refresher.

Of its 70 or so staff, just under half are Royal Navy instructors – engineer and aircrew – while another 20 are civil servants.

And even outside the simulators, 824's performance is impressive – the squadron delivers 33 per cent of the Merlin's flying rate with only 25 per cent of the Navy's assets.



Picture: LA(Phot) Bernie Henesy



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Sterratt





Feeling the need for speed

YOU have to hand it to the Swedes.

They do simple yet effective functionality to a 't'. Ikea. Volvos. Meatballs. Forty-knot fast assault craft.

You're probably not acquainted with the latter. But the Royal Marines are – for the past six months they've been trialling the Swedish-built Combat Boat 90 as the commando assault squadrons go through a speed revolution.

"It's about a cultural shift, turning the landing craft branch from eight knots to 40 knots," says Lt Col Simon Guyer succinctly.

Which is a tall order.

By and large, the means of putting men and machines ashore haven't changed fundamentally since WW2: mother ships unleashing sluggish, flat-fronted smaller boats with ramps to disgorge troops and armour ashore.

And much of that is still the case, except that now the requirement is that the mother ship sits up to 30 nautical miles from the landing spot.

In existing landing craft – vehicle/personnel (LCVP) for troops and smaller items of kit, utility (LCU) for tanks, Vikings, fuel trucks and the like – at six, eight, ten knots, that's a long old journey. It's also cold, uncomfortable, and invariably wet.

As the Officer Commanding Craft Trials Wing with 11 (Amphibious Trials and Training) Squadron, retired Lt Col Guyer and his team at RM Instow in North Devon have the task of assessing any new boat or craft which may – or may not – be used by the Royal Navy's amphibious force.

They've already tried out the PACSCAT – Partially Air Cushion Supported CATamaran – to test the ability of putting heavy kit ashore in a vessel three times faster than existing boats; it did that, but the trials demonstrated the limitations of the concept and it will need further design work before being considered as an operational landing craft.

One size down and the case has been made for a 'Force Protection Craft' – a fast, well-armed gunboat. As the name suggests, its role first and foremost is to safeguard a naval force against fast attack craft (amphibious ships are typically slow and rather lumbering, landing craft especially so). An additional requirement is that it can deliver a 'pre-landing force', a small specialist beach recce/forward party who pave the way for a full landing.

Around a dozen such craft will be needed – and

are likely to replace the existing LCVPs.

One vessel in this class is the Combat Boat 90 (for 1990). The Swedes have loaned the Royal Marines at Instow a couple to evaluate – and in return the Royals have loaned out some Offshore Raiding Craft.

The team at Instow got their hands on the boats in May. After a fortnight's instruction in Sweden with CB90 experts, they returned to Devon for another two weeks of training. A sea training package (mini BOST) in the hands of the Flag Officer Sea Training who were happy that crews could cope with fire, flood and other misfortunes which might befall a boat at sea, followed.

After various checks and assessments to determine safe operating limits, it was time for the 'meat' of the trials: testing the CB90's ability to operate on the front line with the Fleet.

Based at Zeta Berth – the last of 26 berths once used by the Americans as part of the build-up for the Normandy landings – on the River Torridge, the boats have been ranging around the Devon coast (and beyond).

The CB90s weigh around 16 tonnes, have a top speed of about 45kts (they made Instow to Plymouth in five hours, averaging 35kts) propelled along by water jet propulsion system (which also allow them to turn on a sixpence) and are similar in size to an LCVP.

They're run by a crew of four – one commander (a corporal), one helmsman (a marine or lance corporal), and two marines operating the weapons and manning the ropes.

Behind the 'cockpit' there's a large 'passenger hold' with 18 bucket seats – spartan and similar to an airport departure lounge – and a lot of space in the middle for kit.

A neat little ramp at the front, operated by a mandraulic pulley, allows troops to deploy on to a beach (although with their Bergens it's a tight fit).

And that's about it. It's basic – and it works.

"It's a basic boat, you can really throw it about and it keeps coming back for more. That's the sort of thing we like," says Lt Col Guyer.

So far he and his team have tested basic handling, operating with other landing and assault craft (a prerequisite for any future boat), working out of the loading dock of HMS Bulwark, putting

troops ashore, carrying a stretcher aboard safely.

"There's no real comparison with what we operate at the moment – it's a completely different beast," says Lt Col Guyer.

"One of the first myths we had to bust was that these boats can't operate in high seas – they were designed for the Baltic, but yes they can handle the sea and we've had them out at the top end of Sea State 4 with little trouble."

Today it's about as calm as you could hope the Bristol Channel could be in July, let alone November.

The boat races across the sea at 40kts with barely a jolt – there's no trouble sitting down and writing, no roar of engines drowning out radio chatter or conversation.

The only sense of speed in the troop compartment is provided by the wisps of white spray hurtling past the six letterbox windows like a passenger jet cutting through the clouds.

The bucket seats for the men look rudimentary, but the Swedes do comfortable functionality like no-one else.

The helmsman performs an emergency stop – 40kts to zero in two boat lengths. You're not thrown out of your seat. You barely move. Next he turns the craft on that sixpence. Water sloshes against the windows. Otherwise, you barely notice the movement.

"We went up to Wales in a Sea State 4, pretty comfortable. The lads in the back were asleep. Those in the LCVP were throwing up," says Lt Col Guyer.

We're not investing in new craft to be nice to Royal. There's some good logic behind a faster, more comfortable ride.

For a start, you get there more quickly. And when you do, the men are 'fit to fight'.

"As a Marine I know how frustrating it is in an open boat. You're at the mercy of the elements – in Norway the lads are going in covered in ice," explains C/Sgt Ian Gibbons, who's spent 13 years in the landing craft world.

So force protection isn't just about defending the Fleet, it's about protecting the troops. In the back of the CB90 they're warm and dry – but it's not perfect.

There are no heads (the boats are only expected to operate for 24 hours and toilets would add weight and more weight equals less speed). More

importantly, there's no hot water – no way to make a brew or heat ration packs.

More importantly from the force protection criteria, on tests so far armed with a manned heavy machine-gun, the boat hasn't proved to be particularly effective.

"The results were inconclusive – we're going back to South Wales in February for some more detailed live firing trials," Lt Col Guyer adds.

And that's not good, when the first requirement for the craft is that it should be "capable of interdicting and neutralising threats."

The initial assessment of the CB90 is that it's simple, robust (it was designed for being driven onshore on the rocky shores of the Baltic), easy to learn, handle and maintain.

"I think everyone has been impressed by the CB90," says C/Sgt Gibbons.

"It is very easy to drive – if you can drive an ORC, you can drive one of these. It's also easy to maintain – on an LCVP you needed to be triple-jointed to get at the engines."

It's not without its shortcomings. Because it was designed for running ashore in the Baltic it's less keen about sandy and silty beaches – the engine intakes suck in all manner of gunk.

All of these lessons and more will be incorporated into the final specifications and requirements when the MOD looks for firms to build the Force Protection Craft.

The boats won't complete their trials until the end of next year; there's exercising with one of the RFA landing ships to carry out, and more thorough weapons tests to carry out (not least remote weapons firing; a commando will sit in the 'cockpit' and 'PlayStation-fashion' control a gun mounted on the boat's stern), and most importantly, the ability to safely recover a CB90 to Bulwark's davits while under way in rough seas, because landing operations don't stop when the water's a bit choppy.

Whichever existing boat or new design is chosen, the first FPC is planned to arrive at Instow in 2015 with front-line assault squadrons getting their hands on it from around 2017.

"What a fantastic job for the future," Lt Col Guyer enthuses.

"As a marine you could be driving one of these, as a corporal commanding one, racing around at 40 knots. Exciting times."

Pictures: Greg Barrott, 11(ATT) Sqdn





Keeping th

“EXCUSE me,” said the man strolling along a North Devon beach.

“Can you tell me what is going on, please?”

“Certainly,” replied the woman in a sea survival suit.

“There will be an amphibious assault here in 25 minutes.”

The man turned to his partner and sighed.

“I should have brought my camera after all,” he said.

A polite bunch, these Brownians, especially when you consider the momentous events going on around the town of Freepoint.

Not just the threat of trouble from the Ginger territory which surrounds this Brownian enclave.

It is also the rapid metamorphosis of an aircraft carrier into an assault ship, just a few miles offshore.

Mind you, no one should be surprised at the alacrity with which HMS *Illustrious* embraces a new role.

She began life, after all, as a through-deck anti-submarine cruiser, and transformed as if by magic into a very capable strike aircraft carrier.

Not that she changed physically – she was built as an aircraft carrier (albeit a CVS or anti-submarine specialist) and with a flight deck, hangar and aircraft lifts, she will remain an aircraft carrier till her final day.

What *Illustrious* is undertaking is a fundamental change of role, to that of a Landing Platform Helicopter or LPH – a second HMS *Ocean*.

And her rapid journey from dry dock at Rosyth, where she underwent a refit to prepare her for her new role, to the latter stages of Operational Sea Training (OST) on the grey swell of the Bristol Channel is one which has delighted her Commanding Officer, Capt Jerry Kyd.

“Let’s not forget we only sailed from Rosyth on June 17, and in less than five months we have managed sea trials and worked up the ship

in a brand-new role and proved our ability to project power ashore with our Royal Marines,” said Capt Kyd.

“I think it has been a real challenge to do that training and work-up, and it is a testament to the flexibility and professionalism of *Illustrious*’ ship’s company that we are where we are today.”

Although there would be no more Harriers on this carrier,

Capt Kyd said that strike aviation was a continuum, and whilst HMS *Ocean* is an LPH (landing platform helicopter), *Illustrious* is “an aircraft carrier in the role of an LPH.”

Illustrious, he said, was keeping the flame of strike aviation alive as HMS *Queen Elizabeth* takes shape just yards from where *Illustrious* underwent her refit.

“*Illustrious*’ capability is now as an LPH. We will only see helicopters on her flight deck, not fixed-wing aircraft,” he continued.

“But between decks we will see the vestigial elements of carrier strike in terms of manpower and how we generate operations – the enabling architecture, and the choreography of producing a flying programme, for example.

“*Lusty* is back in business, and alongside HMS *Ocean* is keeping the flame alive.”

But back to that windswept Devon beach.

Shortly after Lt Cdr Lindsey Ashwood, part of the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) organisation, had alerted the walkers to the impending invasion, four helicopters could be seen lifting off from *Illustrious*, a few miles off Saunton Sands, site of the mythical town of Freepoint.

The FOST scenario required *Lusty* to back a United Nations Security Council resolution by ensuring the safety of Brownian folk against any aggression from Ginger forces or the pro-Ginger PGF terrorist group.

On this bleak Friday in December, that meant setting up a little capability demonstration to give Ginger something to think about (and also to serve as a warm-up for a long-range insertion of

around 200 green berets into South Wales a couple of days later).

Four Sea King Junglies of 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons flew east, rounded a headland and – the sound all but masked by the sound of the wind – emerged over the crest of the dunes of Braunton Burrows to settle one after another, line abreast, on the wet sand.

Almost 60 commandos of Bravo Coy, 40 Cdo, spilled from the quartet of aircraft, and in a couple of minutes the Sea Kings lifted off again in rapid succession, beating west into the stiffening wind to prepare for the second assault wave.

The Royals – who will be back in training for Afghanistan this month – fanned out as they headed for the edge of the dunes to secure the risk area, lugging heavy weaponry across the soft sand as well as their personal combat kit.

Once more the Junglies lifted off from *Lusty*; the flashing lights of the first two could be seen in the lowering gloom as the second pair picked up underslung loads – a quad bike and trailer, used to ferry ammunition at the beachhead as well as transporting any casualties.

Minutes later the formation again swooped low over the dunes and delivered their cargoes – including two more sticks of ten Royals – before returning to the mother ship.

Watching from the beach was 40 Cdo Quartermaster Maj Paul Barden, Battlegroup Logistics Officer for the exercise.

“Seeing as how *Illustrious* is a CVS transformed into an LPH it has all gone very well from a Royal Marines perspective,” said Maj Barden.

“I was involved in the planning process and we have integrated very well.

“This is all new to the ship; we are used to doing the assault drills and wader drills – the difference to us is really just the internal layout of the ship.

“But flexibility is something that comes naturally to us, so it is pretty much business as usual.”

The Officer Commanding Bravo Coy, Maj Dave Spink, added: “This week has been great.

“Lots of the lads haven’t done amphibious deployments before so this is a great opportunity to break



Pictures: PO(Phot) Ray Jones and LA(Phot) Dean Nixon, HMS *Illustrious*





the flame alight

out of the Afghanistan training.

"We understand we are not the primary training focus for this – we are here to facilitate *Illustrious*' training – but the ship have been understanding in the way they have approached the amphibious embarked forces, doing everything they can to make our stay comfortable."

"But running up the beach to get into the first position on the sand dunes is a better day than living in the mess deck in *HMS Illustrious*, so the Company is happy."

The Company's Sergeant Major, WO2 Paul Clark, concurred.

"It is not so much a test for us as for the ship," he said.

"I am a choreographer, getting things into the right place at the right time."

"But some of these guys will probably never have been to sea before, so it's as much of a learning curve for them as it is for *Illustrious* training to re-role as an LPH – so there is training value for us, and we get to see various elements of the ship."

Back on board *Illustrious*, Amphibious Operations Officer Lt Col Andy Walker RM said: "*Illustrious* has had 30 years of being a CVS, and becoming an LPH has challenged the mind-set of the ship's company and the geography of the ship."

"And both *Illustrious* and *Ark Royal* have been commando carriers

before – they have been in the LPH role."

"There are physical limitations but it is a great commando carrier, and the crew have been really good at seizing the chance to do something different."

Lt Col Walker said that over time the manpower used to looking after fixed-wing aircraft would move on and be gradually succeeded by a generation who have spent their working lives in amphibious assault ships, setting the seal on the change in *Lusty*'s role.

And part of reinforcing the new mind-set are the simple things which the ship's company of *HMS Ocean* would take for granted but is still a novelty in *Illustrious* – "150 lads doing phys in the hangar or weapons drills on the flight deck, and a lot of young lads hodding heavy kit about," said Lt Col Walker.

On Saunton Sands, a dog walker is advised he and his two pooches might want to avoid the area as the winking lights rise from *Lusty* to pick up the embarked force.

All safely gathered in, with the wind still rising (there was to be some "cheeky weather" ahead, according to one Royal), planners could now turn their thoughts to the 80km insertion in the dark of night which would put the ship another step closer to the all-important seal of approval from FOST.

The mix of operations is key to *Lusty*'s future role. The Normandy-

style large-scale landing is almost certainly a thing of the past as the Royal Navy takes a 'toolbox' approach, deploying a four-man team, a troop, a company – whatever is needed.

Ocean proved her worth with strike operations off Libya, and *Illustrious* is willing and able to afford the Army Air Corps' Apaches a platform should it be required.

To achieve that flexibility the ship will host all manner of tailored air groups; she has already successfully handled Lynx, Sea Kings, Apaches, Merlins and Chinooks.

Assault routes through the ship from mess decks allow commandos, shepherded by 'assault guides' – members of the ship's company – to move quickly to the hangar, where they pick up ammunition, bergens and heavy kit.

The Royals then step on to the aircraft lifts and are taken up to the flight deck, where their helicopters sit 'turning and burning'; a full assault wave can be moved ashore by air within an hour.

"There has been a great deal of hard work by the ship's company," said Capt Kyd.

"I have personally been humbled by the efforts of the ship's company to get *Illustrious* from refit to operational readiness in less than six months – an unprecedented pace of work-up," said Capt Kyd.

"The whole ship is now looking forward to whatever challenges lie

ahead."

And with FOST placated – the ship passed the exacting series of tests including a tricky towing exercise with RFA tanker *Black Rover* (pictured below) – *Lusty* will be ready to step into *Ocean*'s place when the helicopter carrier takes her turn in refit.





Put-put put out our Jimmy

IN THE RNA pages (September) Roy 'Happy' Day states that HMS Tactician was the only representative in Karachi for the Queen's visit to Pakistan, but this is incorrect.

In 1960-61 I served in HMS Loch Ruthven in the Persian Gulf as an Ordnance Artificer 4th Class.

Whilst chasing an Arab dhow suspected of smuggling, we damaged the bracket supporting the main prop shaft, and were diverted to Karachi for repairs.

Fully repaired and painted we were alongside in time for the Queen's visit.

The day before the visit a full dress rehearsal took place. We heard the *Alert* sound at the main gate followed by *Present Arms* as the official car approached along the road to the jetty where we were to cheer ship.

The following day we mustered in our ice cream suits



Each month Pusser's Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is Jim Dowsett.

at our designated stations on the upper deck.

We heard the *Alert* at the dockyard gate and the first platoon commanders giving their orders.

Instead of the Royal car appearing, a three-wheeled put-put arrived at our gangway and dumped two of the ship's company on the jetty still the worse for drink.

The Jimmy, Lt Cdr Anthony Arthur Wynter Blaithe, was incandescent with rage, snorting snuff everywhere.

Mike Rogers, the RM detachment Sergeant Major, with the help of the gangway staff, managed to get them on board just before the Royal car came into view.

Needless to say the ship's company were in hysterics even as we cheered ship.

I have often wondered if the Queen thought she had just passed the happiest ship in her Navy!

— Jim Dowsett, Plymouth

Magnificent models of Navy men

I READ WO Stephenson's letter (December) with interest and have to state that I really do not mind how he addresses me, as long as he has no effect on the pension.

As for the mutilated cap, surely his time as 'Ceremonial Training Officer' had put him in a position where he was responsible for ensuring that the rig of those he was training was correct.

To have appeared in a cap that looked as it had come out of a cheap Christmas cracker seems to run against the whole purpose of a 'Ceremonial Training Officer.'

I spent many happy hours on (and running round) Whale Island parade ground when the Parade Gunner was the redoubtable Lieutenant Bill Dungate.

When he barked out 'That man there!' and you looked up and saw his finger pointing at you, the bowels turned to water.

He was so smart that naval tailors used him as a model. However, if Mr Stephenson had turned up on his parade ground wearing *that* cap, even Lt Dungate would have sent for the smelling salts.

May I draw Mr Stephenson's attention to the second volume of my series *Rank and Rate*, which is published this month.

Warrant Officers are included in it, and he will find many photographic examples of how to wear a cap.

Furthermore, he might like to consider my book *Khaki Jack*, which will be published later this year.

Part of the story tells of the Royal Naval officers' and ratings' battles against being taken over by the Army in the trenches of the First World War.

Sub-Lieutenant Clifford Codner was ordered by the Generals to shave his beard off. He refused, and the splendid Lieutenant Alan ('A.P.') Herbert wrote: *New Generals crowded to the spot and urged him to behave,*

But Codson said: 'You talk a lot, but can you make me shave?! For the Navy allows a beard at the bows, and a beard is the sign for me! That the world may know wherever I go, I belong to the King's Navee.'

Such magnificent men would have considered Mr Stephenson's pongo-imitating cap as being the equivalent of a self-inflicted wound.

Nevertheless, to be fair to Mr Stephenson, he has certainly made an advance in one significant direction.

When, in 1960, I was first drafted to Devonport, there was a particularly disreputable bar down Union Street widely known as 'The Royal Naval School of Dancing.'

Now, thanks to Mr Stephenson, we have our very own 'Royal Naval Formation Dancing Team.' — Lt E C Coleman, RN, Bishop Norton, Lincolnshire

...I WAS intrigued by the correspondence between WO1 Stephenson and Lt Coleman.

As an ex-seaman (square rig) I remember in the early 50s and 60s we altered our uniforms all the time (and got away with it.)

In the 50s, illegal 'Australian serge' was a much lighter (in weight) navy blue serge material than the pusser's standard and with 38 inch bell bottoms it was a definite no no! on parade, but going ashore it looked smart (we went everywhere in uniform in those days, better chance of picking up the girls).

Other enhancements included five or seven horizontal creases around the bell bottoms, three sharp vertical creases in your collar, stretching and bleaching your lanyard till it was thin and pure white, cutting your black silk in half to make it fit better around the neck, bleaching your square blue collar to make it a lighter blue, as well as cutting the ribbon on the bottom.

You wore your cap at a slight angle, bow as close to the front as possible. All this topped off with a white silk scarf and a Burberry.



● A bearded Sub-Lieutenant Clifford Codner with warhorse in World War 1. The photo comes from Douglas Jerrold's book *Hawke Battalion*.

As for 'fore and aft' rig (Senior Rates and Officers) I wore a very stiff white paper throwaway collar attached to my shirt with studs, and if you were allowed ashore in civvies you had to wear a hat!

How times have changed, I've seen today's officers ashore wearing army battle dress of Numbers 8s and the only time the rig of the day is No 1s or 3s is for something extra-special.

In bygone days ratings were allowed to wear No 8s ashore,

when we went between ships in the dockyard or between barracks and the dockyard, using the back entrance only.

The only time I saw an officer in No 8s was 'paint ship' when the First Lieutenant borrowed mine.

My only regret is not being able to join up again. At Pompey last week I was turned away, something to do with my age being over 70. What a waste!

— E W Porter, ex RN Seaman, Evercreech, Somerset

Bittern honoured

I AM a member of the Friends of Namsos War Memorial, who commemorate every year the men who died in the Central Norwegian Campaign in 1940.

In May 2011 oil was found leaking from the wreck of the sloop HMS Bittern which was bombed and sunk with the loss of 20 members of its crew on April 30 1940.

The Norwegian authorities decided to empty her fuel tanks which contain an estimated 50 – 100 tons of oil to prevent it from becoming an environmental hazard.

Since it is a burial ground, Norwegian regulations for war graves had to be followed.

At the end of September, the Chaplain of the Royal Navy, the Reverend Scott Brown, and the Norwegian Navy Chaplain, the Reverend Leif Tore Michelsen,

held a short memorial service on board the NSO Crusader which is carrying out the operation.

Both chaplains made short speeches, said prayers and the 20 names of the dead were read out. Among the 35 people attending were members of the Friends of Namsos War Memorial.

Morten Stene, the Mayor of Namsos, cast 20 red roses, one for each of the dead sailors, on the fjord, and both chaplains laid wreaths.

Friends of the memorial put white roses on the fjord and held up the British flag. All members of the crew put red roses on the fjord.

The hull is split in two and the quality has deteriorated. A remote-controlled mini-submarine is being used to aid the extraction of the oil. The operation is still going on.

— Lawrie Douglas

Thank you, Cornwall

ON BEHALF of the staff and pupils at Downham School I would like to thank the officers and crew of HMS Cornwall for all the time and effort they put in to raising a fantastic amount of money to make a most generous donation of £909.

I understand that many of the crew are now spread across the country, and possibly the world,

following the decommissioning of HMS Cornwall.

I hope that this 'grapevine' enables them all to hear of our gratitude and to let them know that we will be able to use this money to improve the education of the pupils at Downham.

— Michael Loveman, Headteacher, Downham School, Plymstock, Plymouth

Seasonal signal from Sussex

READING George Burton's letter (December) about dreaming of snowy hills in England reminded me of Christmas Day in Trinco in 1944.

I was serving as a Signalman at the Dockyard Signal Station doing the forenoon watch. The cruiser HMS Sussex hoisted a signal which read 04A/WT/ which translated into *Oh for a white one*, 'WT' being the white pennant.

We were still out there in 1945 and borrowed the signal and used it ourselves.

— Alfred Thomson, Shanklin, Isle of Wight.

See Marines making history in Afghanistan

I WAS delighted to read of the work being undertaken by the Imperial War Museum to record the work of the Royal Marines in Afghanistan, especially 40 Commando's operations in Sangin last summer (*Photographic Memories*, page 12, November)

As one of the Naval Service's own museums we too have spent significant effort in recording the work of the Royal Marines in Afghanistan, across a broad range of endeavour.

The versatility of the men who have served there is shown across not only war-fighting, but many other disciplines, including the Band Service who have contributed to this effort.

This work has returned some very evocative material, from a Conspicuous Gallantry Cross awarded during Operation Herrick 5, to a homemade cricket bat used at a Forward Operating Base, as well as more than 20 oral history accounts of living and working in Afghanistan.

Much of this material is now on show in a new display at the Royal Marines Museum at Eastney.

I would encourage any of your readers in the Portsmouth area and beyond to visit us and see it for themselves.

— Ian Maine, Curator, Royal Marines Museum, Eastney, Portsmouth

No Manxman myth

I FEEL compelled to answer the letter from Charles Fisher (December) in reply to mine regarding the speed of HMS Manxman.

I found the tone of his letter was accusing me of 'gilding the lily' and I would like to draw your attention to a BBC programme at the end of World War 2 called *A Ship in Disguise*, broadcast on May 17th 1945, with Rear Admiral R K Dickinson, who was Captain of HMS Manxman when first commissioned in 1941.

It was an operation labelled *Operation Mincemeat* and the ship was altered to resemble a French cruiser, the Leopard.

During the broadcast on the BBC radio the Admiral told the interviewer: "We streamed paravanes and increased speed to 30 knots."

"The ship was the fastest ship in the Royal Navy and fully loaded could sustain a speed of 38 knots for 1000 nautical miles.

"Her top speed (fully loaded) was 41 knots. At this pace she could outrun torpedoes, destroyers and dodge shellfire."

Much more, of course, was said in the BBC programme.

During my time on Manxman we only carried mines once and that was when we first left the UK to start the commission in 1951.

The remainder of the time the mine deck was empty, so the ship was much lighter in the water. Hence the higher speed of 44 knots.

I would like to say to Charles Fisher, Would you now like to accuse the Admiral of exaggerating the facts?

— Vic Everest, Cheshunt, Herts

opinion

HMS PROTECTOR, like HMS Endurance, did not start life as a Royal Navy ship.

Both were built in Norway to merchant specifications, hence the spacious and comfortable accommodation which is a feature of both. (And it's easier to make room for sailors when you're not fitting their bunks and messes around the weapons systems.)

Protector spent most of 2011 being turned into a naval ship, having her flight deck moved and specialist equipment fitted. There was however a surprising exception. She kept her cafeteria-style galley, so her ship's company, captain, officers, senior and junior rates, all queue for their food and eat together.

Is there a precedent for this? In Capt Scott's expedition of 1911-12 the distinctions of rank were observed even in a hut

in the Antarctic, not least because the petty officers apparently preferred it that way.

There may be a precedent in a warship, perhaps during World War 2? If our readers know of one, they might care to enlighten us.

Before anyone gets too excited (one way or the other) about this outbreak of democracy, it's as well to bear in mind that it was born out of pragmatism rather than principles.

The ever-practical Navy decided it was too expensive to create separate dining facilities in a ship that was only on lease.

So for now the ship's company are expected to get on with it, which in the usual cheerful adaptable way of a ship's company and with minimum fuss, is exactly what they are doing.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD



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CLASSIC
JACK

BY TUGS



Sad state of mighty Ganges

ON Trafalgar Day I thought I would detour to Shotley Gate to see what has become of HMS Ganges.

I found the main gate locked and rusty, weeds all over the parade ground and the mast very dilapidated, with half of the lower yardarm missing!

I never served in HMS Ganges, but I did visit my cousins who there and remember it as a thriving, vibrant establishment.

The mast was always imprinted in my mind and I think that it is a terrible shame that such an iconic piece of naval memorabilia is being left to rot.

Something needs to be done to preserve it and I urge all readers and ex-Ganges boys to write to their MP and the local council in Shotley to get something done.

— Robert Drew, ex LMA(O), RN/POMA(O), RNR

...I HAVE been given approval for an e-petition to the Government in order to try to save the main mast (pictured right in its prime).

The historic and Grade 2 listed monument has fallen into a state of decay again, and nobody seems to be willing or able to restore it.

The civilian owners of the site have no liability placed upon them to maintain it, and with every month that passes, the condition of the mast gets worse.

There are a few of the original buildings remaining which could be converted to provide a much-needed resource to the local and wider community for meetings, theatre, youth clubs and even Outward Bound facilities.

These buildings could form part of a small conservation area, with the main mast as its



centrepiece.

It would certainly ensure that some traces of the history that HMS Ganges gave to the nation are preserved for future generations to enjoy.

Can I please ask your readers to add their names to the petition using the following link?

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/22454>

— Chris Willcock

Cruisers' part in Barents

IN YOUR review of *Forgotten Voices: Victoria Cross* (Review, page 45, November) you referred to Captain Robert Sherbrooke whose actions in the Battle of the Barents Sea thwarted the Hun and led to Hitler all but writing off his surface fleet.

This needs some supplementing and correction. Sherbrooke richly deserved his VC and the destroyers did magnificently in fending off from the Russian convoy they were guarding a German task force consisting of the heavy cruiser Admiral Hipper, the pocket battleship Lutzow and six large destroyers.

However, they were taking punishment when the cruisers Sheffield, flying the flag of Rear Admiral Robert Burnett (my ship) and Jamaica arrived on the scene.

The Germans then made off because, firstly, in the bad visibility they could not be sure of what they were up against (in fact they still outgunned us in weight of broadside by about two-and-a-half to one), secondly, their HQ warned them not to take unnecessary risks and, thirdly, the cruisers scored three hits on the Hipper, one of which proved serious — one of these hits was definitely by Sheffield.

When we got back to Scapa we were told that details (including names) of the relieving force's part in the battle could not be publicised because it would reveal how weak the Russian convoy escorts really were.

The cruisers' part in this action is still often overlooked.

Initially Hitler did want all the ships above destroyer size to be paid off but Donitz later persuaded him to retain them to a large extent, which is why the British had to sink the Scharnhorst and the Tirpitz later on.

— G L B Pitt, Old Harlow, Essex

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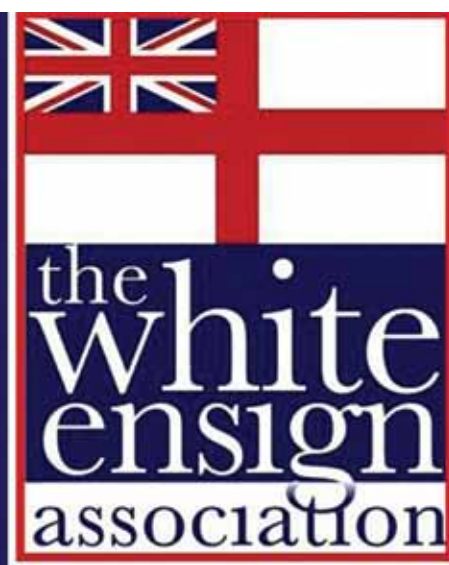
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Busy time for staff at President

FOR Lt Tony Scott, the Remembrance ceremony in the Lloyds of London Underwriting Room brought together the two elements of his working life.

The Reservist from HMS President was one of the officers and ratings lining the floor while underwriters, brokers and other staff looked on as the historic Lutine Bell was rung to observe the two-minute silence.

"It has been a privilege working in this iconic building for my day job," said Lt Scott, who chairs Lloyd's IT Strategy and Architecture Team in civilian life.

"Having my Lloyd's and RNR colleagues together for this important ceremony made it all the more significant."

Members of President also had high-profile roles in the City of London Lord Mayor's Show as well as at other Remembrance events, including Westminster Abbey and Cathedral, St Paul's Cathedral and at the Royal Naval Great Lines War Memorial at Chatham.

Mich parades with her 'boys'

AFTER serving tirelessly providing life saving front-line medical cover to the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and the 4 Scots, Naval Reservist AB Michelle 'Mich' Ping has paraded through the streets of Inverness and Aberdeen with her fellow servicemen and women from the 4th Battalion the Royal Regiment of Scots (4 Scots).

On Wednesday November 30 and Friday December 2 the pavements of Inverness and Aberdeen were packed with people waving flags and cheering on the Servicemen and women as they marched past.

The public had turned out to welcome back the troops, who recently returned from operations in Afghanistan.

Mich was an integral part of front-line operations on deployment in Afghanistan, where she made an outstanding contribution using life-saving medical cover – a classic example of a Maritime Reservist bringing vital, specialist civilian skills to a military role.

Of the homecoming parade, Mich said: "It was an honour and a privilege to parade in both



● AB Mich Ping pictured outside Inverness Castle
Picture: Mark Owens

Aberdeen and Inverness with my fellows in arms."

Pitched into the realities of insurgent war fighting in Afghanistan, Mich always kept pace with "her soldiers" and reflected that "I was nothing without my boys."

Often in the midst of fierce gun battles Mich administered life-saving medical cover for the soldiers around her, and she admitted that "it was the hardest thing that I have ever done."

On regular foot patrols Mich lived for days at a time in some "right holes with the boys."

On one occasion, under rocket and heavy machine gun attack, Mich showed enormous fortitude, courage and resilience to provide first aid to a wounded colleague stuck on a very exposed roof in an extremely dangerous position.

And on more than one occasion she also found herself not maintaining a helicopter – her RNR role – but flying in one providing ad-hoc medical support.

In her civilian career, Mich is a paramedic with the Yorkshire Ambulance Service, working in Leeds as part of their gritty Hazardous Area Response Team.

But as an Air Engineering Mechanic in the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR), Mich is an experienced helicopter technician.

She has been a Reservist for 13 years, and was in the regular Royal Navy for six years.



● ABs Ben Adams, Sarah Newby and David Connon

Trio blaze trail at HMS Raleigh

THREE Royal Naval Reservists have become the first to complete the newly-enhanced ten-week Initial Naval Training course introduced for full-time ratings at HMS Raleigh.

As part of a Maritime Reserves pilot, ABs Ben Adams, Sarah Newby and David Connon joined an entry of 52 regular recruits who started in September.

Following intensive training the successful recruits marched on for their passing-out parade.

AB Newby, a member of HMS Sherwood in Nottingham, joined the RNR in October 2010.

"Although exhausting at times, Raleigh has been the best and most enjoyable ten weeks that I could have asked for," she said.

"I have come away with a great sense of achievement and I'm looking forward to continuing my training as I specialise in the Warfare Seaman Reserve branch."

AB Adams joined HMS Cambria, based in Wales, in February last year and in civilian life works as an insurance broker.

His sister, Catherine, is serving in the Royal Navy as a Writer, based at HMS Nelson.

AB Connon works as a scuba diving instructor and lives in Kent.

Cdr Malcolm Pollock, Staff Officer, Maritime Reserves, said: "The pilot scheme was to assess whether it was credible for us to pull people quickly through training, so instead of taking several years to become trained it could happen in ten weeks."

"The advantages of this approach is two-fold – it means a Reservist has a much quicker transition to trained strength, and they can utilise spare time they may have in the long summer holidays in between college terms and get paid at the same time. It's a win-win all round."


The pilot also fits in with the concept of the Future Reserves 2020 ambition of considerably increasing the Reserves component as an integral part of the RN; reducing the training pipeline time will increase capacity more quickly.

Cdr John Twine, Commander Training at Raleigh, said: "With the Government's drive to increase the role of the Reservist forces in the future the initiative of accelerating the training pipeline of the RNR recruits makes complete sense."


"It also helps us to utilise some of the irreducible spare capacity we currently have as recruiting to the regular service is still operating at a reduced level."

"Under the Initial Naval Training project we are striving to make the regular and reservist recruits interchangeable, and therefore by training alongside each other both sets of recruits will have a common understanding of what each other does and a mutual respect gained from shared experiences."

"When I inspected the passing out class the distinction between the two sets of recruits was not obvious at all, meaning that everyone had achieved the same high standard."



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● AB Christian Rawling leads the Chelsea team onto the pitch at Stamford Bridge

Fruitful visit to Stamford Bridge

RESERVISTS from HMS President in London raised over £2,500 for the Royal British Legion during October's Chelsea-Arsenal Premier League match at Stamford Bridge.

A dozen officers and ratings from London's RNR unit joined other Service personnel to sell poppies to the crowd, helping to raise over £8,000.

"This money will help to make sure we can continue to care and campaign for our Armed Forces and their families, both today and in the future," said Graham Akins of the Royal British Legion.

WO Tony Matthews and LS Ant Peacock were particularly successful in their collecting – the pair raised over £700 on the day, thanks largely to a visit to the very

generous media suite.

AB Christian Rawling had the honour of leading the teams onto the pitch.

"It was a fantastic experience all round, but walking out with the players, with the whole crowd cheering us on, is something I will never forget," Christian said.

The Royal Naval Reservists' participation in the day's events was organised by Arsenal fan S/Lt Richard Notley.

"HMS President collected over 30 per cent of the entire total, which was a fantastic effort considering we were very much outnumbered on the day," he said.

"But the real winners on the day were the Royal British Legion. Oh, and Arsenal, of course..."

Dickie presented with medal

LT CDR Richard 'Dickie' Lewis has been awarded the Queen's Voluntary Reserve Medal for his outstanding service as Air Operations Officer and Sea King observer in the RNR.

Dickie is currently serving with 849 Naval Air Squadron at RN Air Station Culdrose,

where his skill and experience as an Airborne Surveillance and Control (ASaC) Observer are highly valued, particularly during current operations in Afghanistan.

The officer, accompanied by his wife and other members of his family, was presented with his medal at Buckingham Palace.



Afghan Meadows

A RESERVIST on deployment in Afghanistan hopes to extend his service until next January – by which time he will have put in almost 45 years for the Naval Service.

Lt Cdr 'Grassy' Meadows (above) is a Media Operations Officer who is on a six-month tour in the Force Effects Coordination Centre in the HQ of Regional Command (SW) in Camp Leatherneck, Helmand Province.

The experienced officer, on his third operational tour, is the Deputy Communications Strategy Officer working directly to an RAF group captain.

His responsibilities include coordinating the Public Affairs Group, information operations and all Military Information Support Operations sections, and he has a crucial role in the visits by VIPs to the area, including senior UK, US and NATO politicians and senior officers.

Sea Viper is put in its place

THE new Sea Viper Maintainer Training Facility has been opened at HMS Collingwood by Cdre Tim Lowe, the training establishment's Commanding Officer.

Built in compartment A8 of Marlborough Building, the facility will be used primarily to deliver training to Sea Viper maintainers as the practical aspect of the six-week Pre-Joining Training (PJT) course that runs biannually for a maximum of six trainees.

The facility will be used to deliver the practical aspects of the PJT and allows training of maintenance and safety procedures.

The facility will also be used for training Leading Engineering Technicians, System Engineers and Weapon Engineer Officers.

The Sea Viper Maintainer Training facility uses the refurbished missile silo from the Longbow trials barge, from which all of the initial trials firing of the Sea Viper system were conducted prior to acceptance.

On completion of the final trials firing the silo was sent to Italy to be refurbished.

Due to the size of the missile silo, compartment A8 in Marlborough building had previously been identified as the only option for the facility – the compartment was originally the home of a 4.5in gun used for teaching alignment principles, which had to be rehoused to free up the space.

The silo arrived at Collingwood last March and was stored outside while extensive engineering work was carried out to remove the gun and associated support structure and then prepare the compartment.

The majority of the equipment had to be craned into and out of the compartment through a soft patch in the roof which had not been removed since installation of the gun.

Work was completed on schedule in late August and the system was finally accepted in late September, with training starting three days later.



Duke takes title of Lord High Admiral

LISTENING intently to Britain's most senior Naval officer is the nation's new Lord High Admiral, who was inaugurated at a ceremony in Admiralty House (picture by PO(Phot) Terry Seward).

The historic title was bestowed upon the Duke of Edinburgh last year to celebrate his 90th birthday.

The former naval officer – he left the Senior Service in 1952 as a commander – received the Letters Patent and the Lord High Admiral's verge and flag at a ceremony in London.

Before 'taking office', Prince Philip, accompanied by the Queen, received an outline of the Royal Navy's efforts to protect the nation's interests as First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope and CINCFleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar described the Service's current global mission.

The title which the duke now carries traces its history back to the early 15th century; previous incumbents include Charles II and Queen Anne.

In 1709 it was re-titled First

Souvenir for departing captain



COLD, blustery, grey. It could have been the South Atlantic, rather than Crombie Jetty on the Firth of Forth.

So it seemed quite appropriate weather for Cdr Mike Knott to formally leave HMS Portland, as he had taken the frigate through many similar days (and worse) in the course of her Atlantic Patrol Tasking (South) deployment.

Cdr Knott had charge of the ship for nearly two years, 80,000 nautical miles and 83 weeks away from her home port of Devonport.

And as a token of appreciation he was presented with the White Ensign after it was lowered for the final time during his tenure as Commanding Officer (pictured left).

Portland grabbed headlines on her deployment south for capturing drug smugglers and taking part in the Fleet review

for the Chilean Navy's 200th anniversary, as well as carrying out standard APT(S) duties.

Executive Officer Lt Cdr Dan Thomas will now take over as Senior Naval Officer as the ship moves along the Forth to Rosyth for its year-long refit.

Lt Cdr Thomas said: "Cdr Knott epitomises the very best traits of a commanding officer and it has been a pleasure serving as his Executive Officer during a hugely busy, but rewarding, deployment and demanding UK Syllabus programme.

"I have benefited greatly from his guidance, tutorage and friendship during my 14 months on board."

Cdr Knott moves on to work at the Ministry of Defence this year.

■ First female frigate CO – p10

York team analyses spheres of influence

TESTOSTERONE was running high on board HMS York when the ship's company was invited to take part in a health awareness campaign aimed particularly at testicular cancer.

Central to the initiative was the bluntly-titled 'Build Your Balls' competition.

The objective of the competition was for sailors to construct their very own pair of mess-deck testicles, using any materials they deemed fit for purpose.

The ersatz gonads would then be subject to a deep examination by the destroyer's Medical Officer, Surg Lt Alex Shaw, and Clubs LPT Richard 'Chaz' Charrett, for lifelike texture and anatomical correctness.

And to emphasize the thrust of the health initiative, one fake testicle was to be made 'normal', the other was to be cancerous.

After a few hairy moments and some tough decision-making by York's Commanding Officer, Cdr Rex Cox, the Stokers' Mess took the honours, gaining the mess a cool £20 worth of exclusive shopping vouchers – exclusive in

that they could only be used in the Type 42's NAAFI.

LETME Dowson, who was in charge of the stokers' testicles, described the victory as one of the proudest moments of his career so far.

"This competition really has highlighted to me that preparation and focus really got the ball rolling early doors for the team," said the victorious stoker.

"Without their input and

dedication, I honestly don't know how I would be stood here today. I really am chuffed!"

LPT Charrett said: "I would like to say that this competition gave York's ship's company a great opportunity to raise awareness of men's health issues in a fun and pro-active way.

"The unit health committee on the ship have made a fantastic effort to educate personnel in a hands-on way to create a healthy

lifestyle for all on board the mighty York."

PTIs on board deployed ships and at shore establishments take a leading role in all aspects of health, not just sports and physical fitness.

Using the mantra "Fit to Fight – Fit for Life", aspects such as lifestyle are also taken into consideration when an individual seeks to improve his or her health and wellbeing.



● Cpl Julian Marchant and Lt Graham Cannell, two of three winners of the individual Fleet Air Arm award, with Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham

Blades of glory

ATTRIBUTE to Naval aviators past has been unveiled at the Service's headquarters in Portsmouth as plaudits were paid to present-day Afghanistan heroes.

A ceremonial sword is now on display at RN Command HQ to mark a century of flying by the Royal Naval Air Service and its successor the Fleet Air Arm.

The Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators (GAPAN) presented the commemorative claymore, which was unveiled by Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham, Chief of Staff for Aviation and Carriers in recognition of "a century of outstanding courage, professionalism and technical innovation."

He was joined by Rear Admiral (Rtd) Colin Cooke-Priest of GAPAN, Vice Admiral George Zambellas, Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet and Robert Pooley of Pooley Swords who donated the blade.

The Centenary Sword is inscribed with the three wings symbols of pilots, observers and aircrewmembers,

plus a Merlin and Swordfish torpedo bomber.

Meanwhile a new Fleet Air Arm Sword, awarded for the finest feat of Naval aviation, was also presented.

It was handed to Lt Cdr Michael Brown, Lt Graham Cannell and Cpl Julian Marchant of 846 NAS for their outstanding performance in handling a battle-damaged Sea King helicopter in Helmand.

In June 2010 they were flying troops into a patrol base in Babaji when they came under machine gun fire. The aircraft was hit several times but they pressed on to deliver soldiers.

On the final approach it became apparent that the tail rotor was severely damaged and the aircraft was forced to overshoot and fly back to Camp Bastion.

Lt Cdr Martin Lanni, deputy staff aviation officer at NCHQ, said: "The crew carried out a textbook high-speed running landing to save the passengers, crew and aircraft from what could have been a fatal outcome."

Museum looks to the past century

A GRANT of £1.4 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund will be used by the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth to create new exhibitions on the Senior Service in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Storehouse 10, built in 1776, will be completely restored and connected to Storehouse 11, allowing the museum to showcase four centuries of Naval history properly for the first time.

Dr Dominic Tweddle, Director-General of the museum, said they hoped to get the new exhibition space open to the public by 2014, the centenary of the outbreak of World War 1, allowing the museum to highlight the vital role of the Royal Navy at sea, on land and in the air.

Bondi's grave is in safe hands

A JAUNT along the Western Cape Coast by retired matelot Dave Harding brought to his attention the fact that Just Nuisance is not the only dog with RN links in South Africa.

On visiting Knysna, Dave came across a tribute to Bondi the bulldog, complete with the dog's history.

In January 1931, Flower-class sloop HMS Verbena visited as part of her South Africa Station duties.

On board was a bulldog given to the ship three years earlier by the people of Lourenco Marques (now Maputo), which became the mascot.

On the evening of January 30, the ship's company marched to the town hall in the early afternoon to decorate it for the a variety concert, but the heat proved too much for Bondi, who collapsed and died.

Bondi was buried on the wharf, a

wooden tombstone was placed at the head of the grassy mound and a brass plate attached to the wood.

Every visiting British naval ship tended the grave, with a gap during the war until HMS Nereid called in 1948.

After 1953 Bondi's grave fell into disrepair until the tradition was revived by the South African Navy in July 2002 when minehunters SAS Umzimkulu and SAS Umhloti visited.

Cdr Andrew Blake, on hearing of the tradition, sent a party of men ashore to polish the brass and tidy the grave again, and the local Sea Cadets undertook to take care of the grave in the absence of the Navy.

A bronze statue was unveiled by Admiral Louw of the South African Navy in July 2004, collecting coins and notes for the Knysna Animal Welfare Society.

Second award for Chatham

A BUILDING once described by English Heritage as "one of the most intractable problems in the South East" has won its second award of excellence from British architects.

The former iron forge and workshop at Chatham Historic Dockyard, converted into the imaginative and attractive No 1 Smithery museum and gallery and opened to the public in the summer of 2010, won a much-coveted Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Award last May.

Now the complex, the result of a project between Chatham, the Imperial War Museum and the National Maritime Museum, has won a RIBA regional award for conservation for re-use of a redundant building.

The old brick workshop was in a poor state of repair, open to the skies and with sections of brick wall crumbling.

The decay was stabilised and some renovation carried out for safety and aesthetic purposes, and the resultant exhibition spaces now house a collection of around 4,000 ship models, permanent and touring galleries and educational facilities.

RIBA stated: "This is a museum within a museum; its function is to show both building and the objects it houses.

"The falling-down majesty of the existing buildings has been artfully retained and gently restored."

Musical Alliance

AMBIENT modern composer and musician Marvin Ayres and his sound engineer Alex Siddall has visited HMS Alliance as part of his Sacred Spaces project.

The idea is to use incongruous places for composition and performance "and reawaken the inherent and/or dormant spirit residing in these unlikely locations."

The artist's website, www.marvinayres.com, continues: "The instruments will be randomly tuned to complement the environments, and microphones will be used to pick up the full ambience of the spaces once excited by the cellos, violins and violas.

"One element which will link all the locations will be the same series of notes which will be assembled to create one collective piece composed from the overtones, sustains and reverberations recorded in each environment."

HMS Alliance, the World War 2-era boat at the RN Submarine Museum in Gosport, is the subject of a £6.5 million appeal to reverse the effects of decades of aggressive corrosion and to make the submarine more accessible to visitors.

Over £6 million has been raised through grants and donations, but fundraising continues as trustees strive to obtain the final £480,000 to fully cover the restoration work.

For more details see www.submarine-museum.co.uk



● The bronze statue of Bondi at Knysna



New man at helm in Bahrain

CDRE Simon Ancona has taken over from Cdre Tim Fraser as the UK's Maritime Component Commander in Bahrain.

Cdre Ancona (pictured above) also takes on the role of Deputy Commander Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

Addressing international navy representatives at the Maritime HQ in Bahrain, CMF Commander Vice Admiral Mark Fox USN thanked Cdre Fraser for his strong leadership, personal friendship and professional commitment to the coalition operation.

Cdre Ancona joins from the Maritime Battlestaff HQ in Portsmouth, where he was Deputy Commander UK Maritime Force, and before that Commander UK Carrier Strike Force.

Cdre Fraser returns to the UK to take up a promotion to Rear Admiral and implement the recommendations for Defence Reform as the Maritime Team Leader in Naval Command HQ.

In his leaving address, Cdre Fraser paid tribute to the "tremendous support and hospitality" provided by the US Navy, enabling CMF ships and personnel to deploy safely.

The CMF promotes security across 2.5 million square miles of sea in the Middle East, including vital shipping lanes.

Change of scene for field gun museum



● Lord Mayor of Plymouth Cllr Peter Brookshaw and Lady Mayoress Brenda Brookshaw officially open the museum

THE Naval Brigade moved warship guns and limber over miles of unforgiving territory to help relieve the township of Ladysmith during the Boer War in 1899, the origins of the Royal Navy Field Gun competition.

So when the Devonport Field Gun Museum had to move from the South Yard in the Naval Base to a new home at Crownhill Fort, what better way to move the gun than by musclepower?

The Devonport Field Gun Association staged the 'march-in' to the Fort, which is run by the Landmark Trust, who have leased a unit to the

Museum.

That marked the official opening of the Limestone, which now houses the gun and limber, along with other heavy items used during a run, plus photographs and murals.

The Guardroom, home to books and other memorabilia, is not quite ready for visitors, but is being refurbished for its role as heritage centre and museum.

At this stage the museum will be open by appointment only – for details telephone 01752 777236 and leave a clear message, or email dfgassociation@gmail.com

Chinese group see training

A DELEGATION from China has visited Royal Navy training establishments in the South West to see how the Senior Service nurtures its personnel.

Led by Rear Admiral Kang Fei, Commander Dalian Naval Academy, the delegation from the Chinese People's Liberation Army (Navy) visited Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, and HMS Raleigh at Torpoint in Cornwall.

At BRNC the visitors were given an insight into the Admiralty Interview Board selection process for officers, and watched a maritime leadership exercise being carried out on the River Dart.

This is the final, four-day assessment of the officer

cadets' training, based around a rapidly-moving interdiction and humanitarian aid scenario, in which the cadets apply all they have learned in order to plan and execute various actions in both the role of leader and team member.

Further west at Raleigh the Chinese delegation were briefed on the wide range of training carried out at the establishment.

They were given a tour of the Military Training Unit, where they saw sailors undergoing weapons training in the school's modern facilities, which include computerised and live-firing ranges at varying distances.

There was also a demonstration of the training given by the Royal Navy in field survival skills.

At the School of Maritime Survival, the visitors watched



● Rear Admiral Kang Fei with Maj Nev Nixon RM, Officer Commanding the Military Training Unit, and Capt Steve Murdoch, the Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh

trainees deal with floods and fires at sea in multi-million pound simulators which accurately replicate the effects of various disasters in compartments on board a warship.

Having a groups of overseas visitors calling in is nothing unusual for Royal Navy training staff – there are regular official delegations from foreign military forces who seek best practice in Royal Navy establishments.

Both Dartmouth and Raleigh

routinely have personnel from up to 20 different nations training alongside Royal Navy recruits and officer cadets.

In the last quarter of 2011 BRNC has also welcomed Naval Service representatives from India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for short visits, while Raleigh has hosted representatives from the US Navy, the Indian Coastguard, the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Saudi Naval Force.

Navy explorers head to Antarctica

SIX members of the Royal Navy were due to be rekindling the 'Spirit of Scott' during an expedition to Antarctica as *Navy News* went to press.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the death of RN officer Robert Falcon Scott and his four colleagues as they attempted to return to safety from the South Pole, having been beaten by a matter of weeks in their attempt to be the first to 90 degree South by Norwegian Roald Amundsen.

But the Terra Nova expedition of 1910-13 also had scientific and exploratory aims, to which ends it was more successful.

And it is the spirit of the scientific exploration that the British Service Antarctic Expedition will follow.

It is the first joint expedition mounted to the Antarctic Peninsula mainland – three

predecessors in 2001, 2004 and 2007 studied the islands of Elephant, Brabant and Smith.

One aspect of the expedition will be to conduct research on an area of the Frozen Continent which is believed to be warming faster than anywhere else on the planet.

The journey will be followed in schools and universities as part of an education outreach programme – see www.etelive.org

The team of 24, comprising three groups of eight, sail from Chile this month in the 75ft yacht *Australis*, and once in Antarctica will follow Scott's model by setting up a base camp and mounting exploration and conduct forays into remote areas.

There are also plans to make daring ascents of previously unclimbed peaks in the region.

■ www.bsae2012.co.uk



● Cdr Roger Meyer (centre foreground) with the crew of USS Miami at the promotion ceremony on board HMS Victory in Portsmouth Naval Base

US deeps promoted on Victory

THIRTEEN submariners from the US Navy were given a taste of life above deck in the 19th century as they were awarded their promotions in a special ceremony on board HMS Victory.

The Commanding Officer and crew of the US submarine USS Miami were given special permission by the Second Sea Lord to hold a promotion ceremony on board his flagship in Portsmouth Naval Base.

The ceremony was held on the Quarterdeck of HMS Victory, where Admiral Lord Nelson was shot and fatally wounded during the battle of Trafalgar on October 21 1805.

A total of 13 seamen and petty officers from the nuclear submarine were awarded their promotion certificates by the Commanding Officer of USS Miami, Cdr Roger Meyer.

The CO of HMS Victory, Lt Cdr Oscar Whild, said: "It is a great pleasure to be able to welcome the officers and crew of USS Miami on board HMS Victory for this promotion ceremony."

"There are very strong links between our two navies and I know from previous experience how much the crew appreciated the chance to visit the ship

and participate in this type of ceremony on board."

USS Miami is a Los Angeles-class attack submarine, based in Connecticut.

International elf service in Naples



● The driving force behind the Elf and Wellness day: from left, Cdr Andy Johnson, Lt Cdr Voz Johnson, Wg Cdr Tony Ward, CO of the Joint Support Unit and unit PTI Cpl Jason Jones RAF

THE Joint Support Unit Naples organised an Elf and Wellness day for the military community in Naples, raising awareness of fitness and wellness activities in Naples.

Typical taster events included pilates, rugby, sailing, boxercise and Field Gun.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, visiting Operation Ellamy staff in Naples at the time, gave his backing to the event.

"NATO operations for Libya highlighted that professional, physically fit sailors and marines deliver effect first time, every time."

"RN warships have patrolled on the gunline for extended periods and demonstrated that persistence and endurance pays dividends."

"We are all busy but I want to encourage you to make time for adventurous and physical training."

"The Naples 'Health and Wellness' initiative is a cracking way to inspire the whole community to stay fit and we are stronger together; I look forward to seeing the NATO Naples Field Gun team compete hard in Portsmouth on May 26."



From Holy See to the High Seas

THE career of a padre at Clyde Naval Base now ranges from the Holy See to the high seas after his appointment as the new Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain for the entire Royal Navy.

Fr Andrew McFadden (above) has been given the appointment as Principal Chaplain and Vicar General of the Bishporic of the Forces (Great Britain).

It is the culmination of his career as a Royal Navy chaplain which saw the Paisley Diocese loan his services to the Armed Forces on a long-term basis back in 1998 when he answered the "call of the sea" and attended training at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

Shortly after, Padre McFadden took up post as Chaplain of the Royal Naval Hospital Haslar before being appointed to Portsmouth Naval Base's Fourth Frigate Squadron.

Since then he has served on board HMS Iron Duke in the Adriatic, HMS Marlborough in the Gulf, and, in 2006, a move to the Royal Navy's largest ship, HMS Ocean, off the West African coast.

For the past two years the priest has been overseeing the spiritual needs of Royal Navy submariners as seagoing chaplain to Commodore Faslane Flotilla (COMFASLOT) at Faslane.

Father McFadden said: "Submarines are a unique experience; a very specialised group – indeed an elite – but with great heart and humanity."

"I sensed this especially in my time with HMS Astute, the navy's latest submarine."

"It has been a privilege to work so closely with the Silent Service."

He also worked closely with the mine clearance and diving units, and with Sandown-class minehunters HM ships Pembroke and Ramsey.

Fr McFadden said: "It is a time of new and big challenges for all three of the armed forces."

"We need chaplains urgently in order to continue the mission in the Navy, Army and Air Force."

Buoy genius

A SENIOR rate has been recognised for his efforts in adapting a programme for Merlin which was originally linked to the now-axed Nimrod.

CPO(ACMN) Lee Elliott was awarded the Millionth Sonobuoy at the 2011 Merlin Reception for his work on adapting the Wide Area Search Programme (WASP).

Alan Wignall in 2008 had identified elements of the WASP which could be used by Merlin and the Continuous Active Sonar, and Lee has now taken that further, in the process training himself on ex-Nimrod equipment.

Great Scotts

MEMBERS of the Senior Rates Leadership Course (SRLC) 11/12 have been awarded the Scott Trophy for demonstrating exceptional qualities of leadership, management, determination, drive and teamwork.

The five-week SRLC 11/12 started in September at HMS Collingwood, and apart from three of the 17 members getting Grade As, there were, unusually, no formal warnings and no results of any assessments by anyone.

News
inbrief

PLYMOUTH University has awarded a personal chair as Professor in Defence Training and Education to Alan Myers, who is the university's Associate Head at Britannia Royal Naval College.

Alan studied applied linguistics at Exeter and Edinburgh Universities, and on leaving the Army worked in overseas training for the Government and military as an aviation specialist with the EU, primarily in China.

He also worked with the US Department of Defense in Bahrain for years as well as other areas of the Middle East.

LT Rob Gleave had extra cause to celebrate the end of his Lynx flying training.

The officer, one of four pilots and observers to graduate from the course with 702 Naval Air Squadron at Yeovilton, won the Westland Trophy, donated by AgustaWestland, as the best operational flying student.

Another student, Lt John Philips, won an Audi TT weekend drive – a prize donated by Loders Audi of Yeovil for the student who has applied most effort.

TV CHEFS the Hairy Bikers filmed footage for their latest series on board HM ships Victory and Illustrious in Portsmouth.

The episode had a war theme, and looked at the type of food eaten by sailors in Napoleonic times as well as today.

When not filming, the Bikers talked to sailors on board Lusty, including the chefs in the main galley.

The episode was broadcast at the end of last year.

ALAN Sunderland has retired from BRNC after 38 years of service at the college.

After nine years in the Merchant Navy, Alan returned to his home town, married his wife Jill and started work at the college in 1973.

After stints in the West End Galley area and the Armoury he moved to shift work based at the Main Gate, which he has done ever since, latterly with the MOD Guard Service.

He was presented with a framed picture of areas of the college by Commodore BRNC Cdre Simon Williams.

VOLUNTEERS supporting families of Service personnel in the South West have been commended in the latest MOD People Awards.

The Plymouth-based community volunteer project forms part of the Naval Personal and Family Service (NPFS) and Royal Marines Welfare (RMW) community support functions in the western area of the UK, and is a joint collaboration with the Royal British Legion.

THE longest-serving and original member of the National Coastwatch Institution, Cdr Robbie Wilson, still maintains ties with RN Air Station Culdrose.

Now retired, Robbie was Commander (S), in charge of logistics, and he continues to support the Cornish air base as an advisor on accounting matters.

Cream of the crop

THE Initial Warfare Officer (Foundation) or IWOF course, is the professional course undertaken by warfare officers normally after passing out from initial officer training.

The 14-week Dartmouth course concentrates on development of navigation and maritime skills along with enhanced, continued academic studies.

The last course, included an international student for the first time – S/Lt Nathan Milky, the

top Bangladesh Navy cadet of his cohort and the first from his country at BRNC since 1994.

Nathan joined BRNC a year ago for Initial Officer Training, and his Initial Fleet Time was spent in HMS Ocean, though the international students moved on when she became involved in Operation Ellamy off Libya.

He paid tribute to the support he has received from staff and students, and in turn has helped support other overseas trainees.



● S/Lt Nathan Milky of the Bangladesh Navy in the bridge trainer at BRNC
Picture: Craig Keating (VT Flagship)



Jason is in record books

THE Commanding Officer of 820 Naval Air Squadron has put his name in the record books by becoming the longest-serving front-line CO in the Fleet Air Arm.

Cdr Jason Phillips (above) has spent more than three years in charge of the Culdrose squadron.

During that time his Merlins have been deployed on operations across the globe as far afield as Brunei and the Somali coast, and have flown more than 4,600 hours during more than 2,300 sorties.

And last year the squadron swept the board winning all four Fleet Air Arm trophies – the Breitling Trophy, the Australia Shield, the Bambara Flight Safety Trophy and the Rolls-Royce Engineering Efficiency Trophy, the first time this has ever been achieved.

Cdr Phillips said he had loved leading his team of 160 dedicated professionals, and the success of 820 was “indisputably down to their efforts”.

He now moves to a post in Bosnia before taking his new appointment as the Commander of Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

It all adds up

A ROYAL Navy officer has been awarded the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal for serving a total of 1,178 days on operations including Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Formerly an aircrewman, Lt Mark Green is currently training as a Lynx observer with 702 NAS.

Collingwood team restore Little Ship

FIVE trainees and a member of staff from Victory Squadron at HMS Collingwood have started work on restoring a Dunkirk ‘Little Ship’.

The first phase of work on Dorian is to sand and scrape the hull, inside and out, back to bare timber and to remove the old caulking from between them.

The aim is to have this phase finished by the spring, and with

the team spending as much of their spare time as possible working on Dorian most of the de-caulking is now complete, with 80 per cent of the port side timbers already stripped back.

Internally, the aft section has had new strengthening wishbones added.

Other work includes restoration of the doors and hatches that were fire damaged, original metal work being restored, and new timbers

placed.

The Trust has also set up a Facebook page covering the work.

One of the team, AB(WS) Gethin Jones, said: “It was a privilege to be involved in Dorian’s restoration and I welcomed the opportunity to lend a hand to help bring her back to her former glory.

“I look forward to working on her again when I can be spared from my professional training in

Collingwood.”

The team wore Seafarers UK t-shirts showing support for a charity that they back in a variety of ways.

Dorian is currently being housed in a heritage workshop at Southampton Docks.

She played her part at Dunkirk during World War 2, helping take Allied troops off the French beaches, and she later went on to become a houseboat on the River Thames.

She was almost destroyed by fire ten years ago.

It is hoped to get the boat seaworthy again by 2015 for her 100th birthday and the 75th anniversary of Dunkirk.

It will then be part of a planned £8m museum, due to open in 2015, which will house historic aircraft and ships linked to Southampton.

Collingwood has a long-standing relationship with the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships (ADLS), with trainees from the Fareham training base assisting with the annual ‘Veterans cruises’ since 2007, the most significant of which was in 2010 when Royal Navy personnel joined the 70th Anniversary Commemorative return to Dunkirk.



● Pupils from Kelly College in Devon enjoy a day out with the Royal Navy in Plymouth

Picture: Mike Kinsey (www.snapstar.co.uk)

Grand day out for Kelly pupils

PUPILS from Kelly College Preparatory School Reception and Years 1 and 2 enjoyed thrilling visits to 539 Assault Squadron RM and the Dauphin helicopter unit which supports Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) staff.

The Royal Marines visit was facilitated by unit CO Lt Col Michael Roddy.

The pupils were treated to a ride in a landing craft at the unit’s Turnchapel base, and saw demonstrations by a raiding craft and a hovercraft, which they also boarded for an inspection.

They also tasted the latest military rations, teacher Mrs Barbour was dressed as a stealthy raider, and in a darkened room the children used night vision viewers to search for infrared glowing lights.

Younger children enjoyed a separate visit to the Dauphin helicopter flight based at Plymouth Airport,

which services the requirements of FOST.

They had a towed ground ride and took a seat in the cockpit of the aircraft, and were also given a tour of the airport’s fire station.

Headmaster Matthew Foale said: “With Kelly’s Naval history and Service links, it is always a pleasure to interact with those who serve.

“The children and staff had wonderful visits and benefited tremendously.

“We are extremely lucky at Kelly to have the opportunity to make visits like this and are very grateful to the Royal Marines and Royal Navy.”

Kelly College, situated in Tavistock, was founded by Admiral Marwood Kelly in 1877 as a school “for the sons of Naval officers.”

It is now a much larger concern, with a particularly good reputation for sporting achievements.



● Charlie Cook and his daughter Carol on board HMS Exploit at Penarth Marina with members of the ship's company

Charlie goes back to sea with Exploit

PATROL boat HMS Exploit took a Naval veteran back to sea for the first time in 20 years on Armistice Day, writes *Mid Victoria Summers* RNR.

The boat, attached to the Birmingham URNU, welcomed World War 2 veteran Charlie Cook, aged 95, and his daughter Carol to Penarth Marina near Cardiff, where the ship is based.

From there the ship, with three Birmingham URNU members on board as well, sailed into the Bristol Channel and a choppy sea just outside Cardiff Bay.

When asked by BBC Wales how it felt to be back at sea, Charlie cheerfully announced that it was “a bit rough” but he was enjoying himself.

On arrival back in Penarth, the ship’s company and students

held a remembrance service with Charlie watching from his seat on the flying bridge.

Charlie Cook was born in Winchester in 1916 and attended a naval school from the age of 12.

He had several near misses during his service; just 14 days after transferring from HMS Courageous to the Submarine Service, the carrier was sunk by a U-boat, and on transferring to HMS Otus, the first submarine in which he had served was lost.

He served the remainder of the war in HMS Umbra, which sank numerous enemy ships in the Mediterranean.

After leaving the Navy in 1947, Charlie joined the Coastguard and retired at 65 in 1981.

He now lives in a nursing home in Newbridge.



TWO helicopter pilots based at RN Air Station Culdrose have passed career milestones – and between them have spent more than 20 months in the air.

Lt Cdr John Wells (left) has achieved more than 8,000 hours of flying, involving some 4,000 separate flights.

He was awarded his wings 30 years ago, and subsequently won a prize as the Navy’s top anti-submarine warfare pilot.

He has flown Sea Kings on exercises, in operations and in conflicts (he was with 826 Naval Air Squadron during the Falklands campaign), was responsible for training the Malaysian Navy

to operate the Wasp, flew the S-61N commercially during a six-year sabbatical and is now Maintenance Test Pilot for Sea Kings and Merlins.

Lt Cdr Andrew ‘Tank’ Murray (right) has totted up 7,000 hours – 6,500 of those on the “Queen of the Skies”, the Sea King

He has seen service in Iraq, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, and flown Search and Rescue missions, winning the Air Force Cross for gallantry.

Tank is currently serving as a Qualified Helicopter Instructor, Instrument Rating Instructor and Night Vision Goggle Instructor on 849 Naval Air Squadron.



20 months aloft (not all at once...)



'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'



Service at Rathlin Island

MEMBERS of Limavady branch attended a remembrance service and wreath-laying ceremony on Rathlin Island as guests of the Ballycastle branch of the RBL.

A church service of remembrance was held in St Thomas Church of Ireland, followed by the laying of eight wreaths at the Royal Navy war graves in the adjoining graveyard (pictured above).

Seven standards were paraded including Limavady, and the branch's wreath was placed at the grave inscribed 'Three Sailors of the Great War, HMS Viknor, 13th January 1915'.

On the return ferry journey to Ballycastle a poppy wreath was cast into the sea at the site of the wreck of HMS Drake, torpedoed and sunk in Church Bay, Rathlin Island, on the October 2 1917.

Legacy plea over Cavalier

SAVING a ship like HMS Cavalier is, to some extent, the easy part, according to S/M Sid Anning, founder and former chairman of the HMS Cavalier Association.

The hard part is preserving and maintaining the ship, he continued, adding his congratulations to the staff and volunteers at the Historic Dockyard Chatham for their efforts in keeping the wartime destroyer in good shape.

Sid is backing the Historic Dockyard Trust's campaign to attract legacies from individuals and groups – including residue funds from associations which close down.

For more details on supporting Cavalier, or other historic artefacts at Chatham, contact Paul Barnard on 01634 823844 or email pbarnard@chdt.org.uk

Royal Margate

MARGATE branch members Sid Jones and Harry Allen were presented to the Queen when she visited the town on Armistice Day.

S/M Sid, branch president, and S/M Harry, chairman, are both veterans of World War 2, and were amongst only eight veterans to meet the monarch.

Each year Margate branch places a wreath on the grave of the unknown sailor in St John cemetery.

Vindictive memorial 'must be preserved'

A FORMER Naval officer and author says a memorial from a daring World War 1 raid must be saved soon or it will be lost forever.

Ernest Coleman's latest project is an account of the 1918 raids on Zeebrugge and Ostend.

Churchill wrote that the raids "may well rank as the finest feat of arms in the Great War, and certainly as an episode unsurpassed in the history of the Royal Navy."

A total of 11 Victoria Crosses were awarded, and at Zeebrugge, six decorations for bravery were won every minute.

The cost was high – 240 died during the raids or as a result of wounds, while 412 were injured.

Towards the end of last year Mr Coleman visited Ostend to photograph the bows of HMS Vindictive, set up by the Belgians in the 1920s as a memorial to the raids.

Vindictive was a late-Victorian protected cruiser which was converted in 1918 to launch a raid by Royal Marines on the mole at Zeebrugge, neutralising the port and bottling up the small warships and submarines based inland at Bruges.

That raid was only partially successful, and the cruiser was so badly damaged that she was

sacrificed just weeks later in the follow-up raid on Ostend, at which she was sunk as a blockship – though this operation was even less effective than Zeebrugge.

Mr Coleman had last visited the memorial at Ostend around 30 years ago, "and at that time, found the memorial to be in an immaculate state surrounded by well-tended gardens," said Mr Coleman.

"On my recent visit, however, the condition of the memorial, and its surroundings, was truly appalling.

"Rust is everywhere, grass is growing out of the anchors, parts are falling off, and the gardens have long been left to the weeds.

"The masts of the Iphigenia and the Intrepid – which were originally placed to the rear of the bows – have gone and been replaced by rusting scaffold poles.

"The War Memorials Trust is unable to help as they only deal with memorials in this country.

"Equally, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cannot help as the memorial belongs to the Belgians."

Mr Coleman has been in touch with the granddaughter of Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, who masterminded the raids, and she has given her support to any attempts to preserve the memorial, as did Admiral the Lord Boyce,



● The Vindictive memorial in Ostend

former First Sea Lord, Chief of Defence Staff and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

Mr Coleman said: "I believe that, if the Belgians have lost interest in maintaining the memorial, it should be brought back to this country and re-erected at a suitable site – for example, at Dover, on Horse Guards Parade – it is no bigger

than the Royal Naval Division memorial which was recently restored to the Parade – or at a naval base.

"Even as the only surviving portion of a Victorian cruiser, it is worth saving – as a memorial to extraordinary courage, we would fail in our duty if we did not ensure its continued survival."

■ Heroes of the RN – p12

Memories of Falklands Conflict

STAFF at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum in Gosport want to hear from submariners about their memories of the Falklands Conflict.

A new exhibition, *Falklands 30 – War patrols*, opens in the spring and will comprise ten personal recollections from deeps who served on the five boats sent to the South Atlantic in 1982.

The aim is to explore from a personal perspective the experiences of submariners involved in the last major naval war of the 20th century.

The museum is not looking for lengthy testaments but key memories – is there a single memory that captures why these patrols were different? What were the highs and lows? Were there moments of great excitement, real fear, laughter?

The museum would also like to see any objects, photographs and other souvenirs from the Conflict for possible use in the exhibition.

Contact Debbie Corner, RNSM Keeper of Photographs, at debbie.corner@submarine-museum.co.uk



● EX-RADIO Supervisor Peter Brown contacted Navy News from Cape Town after reading about the dedication of a boat to Jack French by Teign Valley Sea Cadet unit. Peter said: "I thought readers might like to see a picture of Jack. He is seen here in the left foreground as a Leading Telegraphist enjoying Christmas dinner in the junior ratings' dining hall in HMS Albion immediately after the 1956 Suez campaign. Jack was a great messmate and a good friend to all in the W/T Department. It was good to read of him being commemorated in this way."

Tribute paid to Royal Marine

A MEMORIAL plaque to a Royal Marine who died in Afghanistan in 2006 was unveiled during an annual Royal British Legion service at East Barnet.

The day's programme began with a church service to launch the Legion's Poppy Appeal at the Brookside Methodist Church, attended by the Mayor of Barnet, Cllr Lisa Rutter, and the Mayor of Hertsmere, Cllr Peter Knell.

Almost 20 standards from the Legion and other ex-Service associations featured in the parade, which formed up again after the service to march past the mayors before returning to the RBL Hall.

Here a ceremony was held to commemorate Sgt Paul Bartlett RM, who died from multiple wounds after being shot by Taliban insurgents in the Sangin area on June 27 2006.

Sgt Bartlett grew up in Barnet, attended Queen Elizabeth's School and was a member of 218 (Barnet) Sqn Army Cadet Force, both of which were represented at the ceremony (pictured above right).

After an address, Sgt Bartlett's

Breast unit cash

PERSHORE and District branch celebrated their tenth annual Trafalgar Dinner with the presentation of a cheque for £1,500 to the Worcestershire Breast Unit Appeal.



uncle, Paul Adams, unveiled an engraved plaque to mark his nephew's sacrifice.

A bugler from the Royal Marines Band Portsmouth sounded the *Last Post* and *Reveille*, and wreaths were placed by Mr Adams, Theresa Villiers, the MP for Chipping Barnet, Maj Angela Richardson of the Army Cadet Force and L/Cpl Ashley Bishop RM.

Busy shipmates

SHREWSBURY branch invited a representative group from the town's affiliated submarine HMS Talent to take part in their Remembrance Day ceremonies.

A dozen members of the branch took part in the march from the castle to St Chad's Church, with a further eight less-mobile members attending the service itself.

Branch officials laid wreaths on behalf of the branch and the Royal Marines Association.

The group from Talent enjoyed a drinks evening at the Shrewsbury Beaconsfield Club, and after the formal ceremonies were also welcomed to an informal buffet

lunch by the branch before they headed back to Devonport.

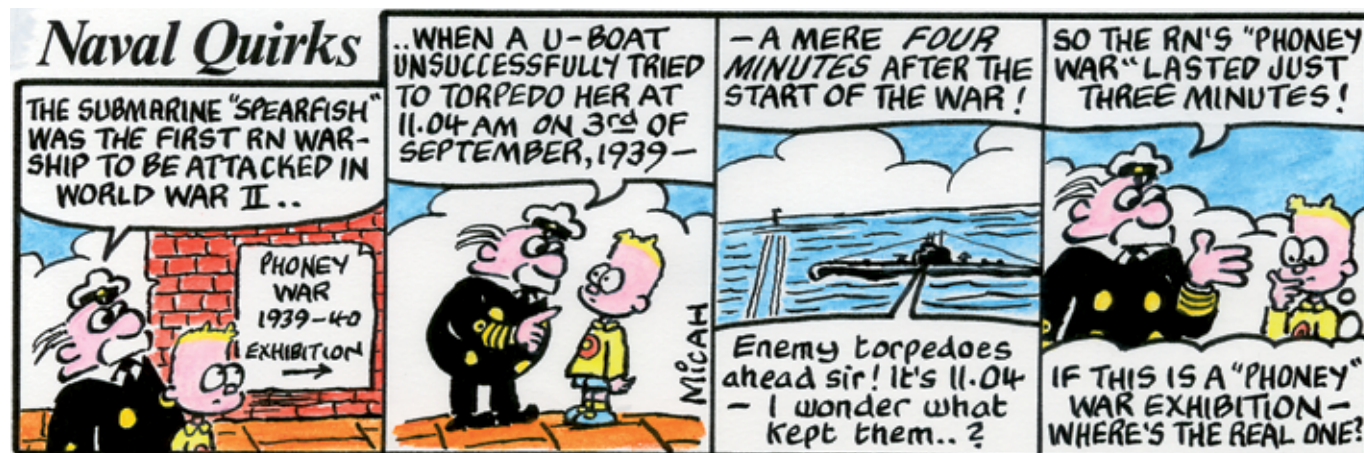
Members of Woking branch were also busy at the end of 2011.

More than 60 shipmates and guests attended the annual Trafalgar Dinner at the Hoe Bridge Golf Club.

They then put maximum effort into the RBL's Poppy Appeal.

On Armistice Day the branch's annual parade was held in the town centre, featuring nine standards and 50 veterans and a crowd of around 1,000 onlookers.

Shipmates also paraded with standards on Remembrance Sunday.





Return of Double Sevens

A GOOD many '77' weekends were enjoyed at Mill Rythe holiday village on Hayling Island, mainly because of the hard work of S/M Derek Munn.

When Derek died in 2010 the committee disbanded, and the Double Seven weekends, which also raised large sums of money for charity over the course of 20 years or so – looked to have ceased.

Since then, through the hard work of S/M Ann Caswell, a revival weekend was launched last October, and from the 74 who attended a committee was founded in an endeavour to get the ball rolling once more.

The weekends were originally aimed at Areas 1 and 6, 5 and 2 – hence the Double Seven title.

Former members, and new recruits, are invited to help return the weekends to their former glory.

Mill Rythe, in Hampshire, has been booked once more, for the long weekend of March 23-26, at a price of £89 per person half-board.

The deposit of £25 needs to be paid as soon as possible, and the balance eight weeks before March 23.

If you are interested in joining in, contact Katy Lansley at Mill Rythe (see www.mill-rythe.com/adults/) or call Ann Caswell on 01962 880198 until 1900, after that time use 07743 576861.

Bruce Association decides to close

THE most recent Annual General Meeting of the HMS Bruce Association in Scarborough had one item on the agenda which was the cause of some sadness – the decision to close down.

The main reason for this difficult decision was that most of the members are now either in their late 70s or in their 80s.

Few members are now able to drive and most rely on a younger relation to bring them to the reunion. A number have also 'crossed the bar'.

HMS Bruce was commissioned in Crail, Fife, as a Boys Training Establishment in 1947 on the site of a previous Royal Naval Air Station HMS Jackdaw.

It is understood that the intention was that it would attract recruits from Scotland and the northern towns and cities of England.

But this strategy appeared not to work, as some of the boys came from London and even further south to undergo training.

A further set-back was that in 1947 there was a very severe

winter and the establishment closed down in the early 1950s and became a Joint Services Linguistic Training Establishment to establish a team of Russian interpreters as a result of the developing Cold War.

The first Commanding Officer of Bruce was Capt 'Tiger' Marsh, himself an ex-Boy Seaman.

His First Lieutenant was Lt Cdr Norman Jewell, who commanded HMS Seraph during the war and whose most famous action was probably that where he had a dead body dropped over the side of the boat off the coast of Spain.

The body had a briefcase attached to its wrist with a number of documents inside suggesting that the Allies would invade Europe from southern Greece.

The ruse – Operation Mincemeat, later to be known as the case of 'the man who never was' – worked, and when the Allies landed in Sicily there were far fewer enemy soldiers waiting for them than might have been expected.

Some boy recruits couldn't stand the rough life and were discharged, but for those who remained it was adventurous.



Probably the most demanding duty was to climb the 130ft mast, which was manned for the visits of special guests.

Bruce didn't have a swimming pool, which meant that the 40-mile drive to the Rosyth pool in the back of a lorry for a swimming test was probably the least strenuous and most enjoyable part of the training.

After a time a swimming pool in Dundee was used – but it was almost as far away as Rosyth.

After basic training the boys were split into three classes, for Seamen, Wireless Operators or Signalmen ('Bunting Tossers'),

but a number converted at a later stage to Sick Berth Attendants and other specialisations.

There was much sadness at the decision to close down the association but it was accepted that it should close whilst there were a few active members (pictured above) rather than it should just fade away – and members will still think of the tough but happy times they enjoyed as Boy Seamen.

In the fishing village of Crail there is a museum with one room dedicated to the air station, HMS Bruce and the Linguistic Training Centre.



Diving: deep sea and high board

A FORMER Royal Navy deep sea diver was also the unofficial photographer in many of his old ships – and now some of his archive is available online.

Brian Owers served in the 1950s, and his old ships include the last battleship HMS Vanguard, light Fleet carrier/heavy repair ship HMS Triumph and boom defence vessel HMS Barleycorn.

He was also at Suez, and in his day was the Royal Navy springboard and high board diving champion.

Brian, now 79, has suffered from multiple sclerosis for more than 30 years, and his son Jim has put many of his pictures on to the Flickr photo site – www.flickr.com/photos/parkside_school/5836085429/in/set-72157626844511629/

The pictures here are typical of the Navy at work, at play and on ceremonial duty.

Above is Brian and an unnamed associate skylarking from the diving board; right is Brian when he was part of the salvage team on board HMS Safeguard.



Tribute to boy sailors

PLANS to create a memorial and Book of Remembrance for the hundreds of boy sailors who died in World War 2 are coming to fruition.

James Reed – who signed up as a boy sailor in 1937 – researched the names of 534 Boy Seamen aged under 18 killed by enemy action in World War 2 in 80 warships.

Now he has arranged for the carving of a memorial plaque which will be placed in Portsmouth Cathedral, along with a roll of honour – the only tributes specifically for such boy sailors.

The first boys who died in the war were on board HMS Philomel on September 6 1939, light cruiser HMS Dunedin on September 10 and seven on board aircraft carrier HMS Courageous on September 17.

Almost a quarter of the casualties were suffered on October 14 when HMS Royal Oak was attacked in

Scapa Flow – 125 died when the battleship sank after being torpedoed by Günther Prien's U-47.

The next greatest loss came when 71 of the teenagers died in HMS Hood – 1,415 men died in total when the pride of the Royal Navy was sunk by Bismarck in the Denmark Strait.

The Portland stone plaque was due to be finished by stonecarver Robyn Golden-Hann in Andover as *Navy News* went to press, and the book was with a bookbinder in Winchester.

A memorial service and unveiling ceremony has been arranged for the cathedral on March 18.

The £8,000 cost of the stone and book has been borne by Mr Reed, who is hoping to recoup the outlay through donations – cheques, made out to the 'RN Boys Memorial Fund', can be sent to 10 Cheltenham Gardens, Hedge End, Southampton SO30 2UR.

Fisgard officials change

THE FISGARD Association, an organisation for ex-Royal Naval Artificer Apprentices, held its 15th AGM at the Royal Maritime Club in Portsmouth.

This year saw several changes on the committee, including chairman S/M David Eaton retiring after ten years.

His successor is ex-FAA tiffy S/M Ted Sanderson.

Secretary S/M Dirk Barclay and treasurer S/M Keith Miskins were re-elected, as was the editor of the association journal *The Fisgardian*, S/M John Stupples, and association webmaster S/M Nolly Bland.

Social secretary S/M Richard Owen stood down on health grounds, and minutes secretary S/M Harry Brickwood retired, but for once there were more members wishing to join the committee than spaces available.

www.fisgardassociation.org

Alert event is the last

THE HMS Alert Association (1961-63 commission) held their 13th and final reunion in Leamington Spa.

The event marked the 50th anniversary of the commission, and was much enjoyed by those gathered and their guests.

Reunions were organised from 1997 by Cox'n 'Bulldog' Geoff Drummond, and were handed over to 'Doc' Bob Howard in 2000.

Bob will keep all the records and a list of the ship's company and will be happy to help with any requests for help or information – telephone 023 9279 9141 or email robert.howard403@ntlworld.com

Heading east

MORE than 100 members of Plymouth branch and their guests – including visiting veterans from Bracknell, Bristol, Slough and London – headed east to the Sefton Hotel in Babbacombe for their Trafalgar celebratory weekend.

The guest speaker at the Saturday banquet was ex-president of the branch Rear Admiral Ric Cheadle.

The rum raffle raised £486 to be split between the Joint Services Hosanna House for disabled ex-Services and the RN&RM Charity.

Hull online

HULL branch's new website is up and running – and shipmates on Humber side invite you to take a look and comment via the 'guestbook' page.

The site can be found at www.spanglefish.com/royalnavalassociationhullbranch

Christmas toys

LAST June six members of the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association took school supplies and toys out to the children of Christmas Island.

They are now collecting dolls for the girls as they have no toys to play with.

These will be collected by members and sent out to Christmas Island in the early spring of this year.

50 years on

THE HMS Lowestoft Association held a reunion at Chatham to mark the 50th anniversary year of the frigate's first commission in 1961.

More than 80 members and guests attended, including two former COs, Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo and Admiral Sir John Treacher.

Another reunion is to be held in October – for more details see www.hmslowestoft.co.uk

30th at Southport

IN 2007 Steve Hawkshaw organised the Southport Falkland 25 event to mark the anniversary of the Conflict.

And now he is organising the Southport Falkland 30th anniversary and BAFFD Parade, which will be held on July 1.

The 2007 event attracted a clutch of VIP guests, including the then-Secretary of State and Minister for Veterans Derek Twigg. Invitations have been sent out

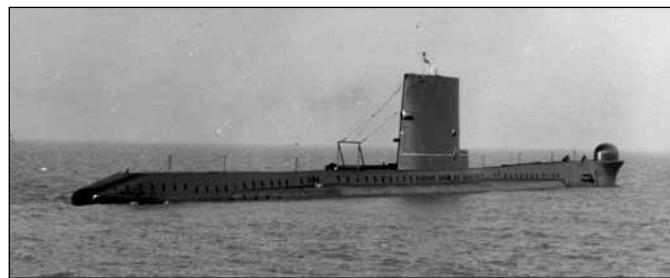
to a similar array of guests for this year's event – and the invitation is also extended to seafarers and association standards.

Steve said he also has permission to use a room inside Southport Town Hall for a Falklands display that will be open to the public in the period before the parade.

He would like to obtain artefacts or memorabilia to display.

Contact Steve at steve.theveteransfund@btinternet.com

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery destroyer in our November edition (right) was HMS Violent, and Mr J Crome of Brixham in Devon wins £50 for giving the correct answer.

This month's mystery boat, pictured above, was an overseas patrol submarine launched within a year of the war's end – one of three built by Cammell Laird at Birkenhead.

She bore the name of a Visigoth ruler whose army was the first in 800 years to sack the city of Rome, but this boat was not a history-maker, instead providing sterling service which included a substantial rebuild, during which her fin was remodelled, and a change of role in the Cold War.

She is pictured here after her rebuild, and was finally consigned to the breakers' yard in 1971. What was her name?

We have removed her pennant number from the image.



Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is February 10 2012. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our March 2012 edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 203

Name

Address

My answer



New year, more action

IN THE last issue of *Navy News* we promised to update readers on the action points that had fallen out from the Ministerial meeting, held on November 1, writes Jane Williams of the NFF.

The topics included Education, Service Families Accommodation allocations and Preference, Spousal Employment and opportunities for the Secretary of State to hear from Armed Forces families.

As these actions take shape and give tangible results we will report back to you....

■ Service Families Accommodation (SFA)

With the planned changes to Housing Information Centre (HICs) in 2012 and the reduction of eight HICS to two, will the IT systems planned to support the changes be in place?

The answer – robust testing will be taking place in the New Year, the system will only go live once there is confidence that everything has been thoroughly tested and is working.

Will you be moving SFA soon?

The electronic version of the 1132, (the application form for SFA) has had a good take-up but more could be done.

Fifty per cent of recent RN 1132s were submitted electronically, the benefits of knowing that your application has arrived, the ability to track your application on-line and receive correspondence via e-mail totals up to a 70 per cent efficiency improvement.

If you can't access the Intranet to make an application we really need to hear from you....

DIO want to know how the application process can be best improved for Royal Naval families... The e1132 can be found via the Intranet: <http://apps01.domis.mil.uk/e1132/>

The Chief Executive of DIO Andrew Manly hosted a meeting with the Families Federations on November 30 to discuss DIO business.

The news is that he is engaged and has extended invitations to the Federations to attend briefing sessions and update him directly on concerns and issues – feedback, feedback, feedback please...

For information, we asked if introducing a Cycle to Work scheme could be reconsidered but the response is that under the current JPA constraints nothing further can be done.

If you think it would make a difference to you as a result of the changes in Home to Duty allowances then we will revisit this once the 'son of JPA' is in place. Over to you for comment..

■ Public Sector Pay Awards

As part of the Autumn Statement on November 29, the Chancellor announced that public sector pay awards, including those for members of the Armed Forces, will average at one per cent for the two years following the public sector pay freeze.

The Government has confirmed that the public sector pay freeze will end in March 2013, but given the wider pressures on the public finances, there is a need for a further period of pay restraint.

Incremental progression will continue for eligible Service personnel.

The Armed Forces will not be asked to consider options for more localised pay.

For further information

serving personnel should see DIB 2011DIB/100 on the Defence Intranet.

The *Daily Mail* asked for a view from the NFF, here is the extract printed on December 1:

"With all the uncertainty for the forces at the moment this is another blow. We recognise that everyone – the military, people in civvy street – are having a tough time at the moment. But this is not helpful in the run-up to Christmas."

"Next year the Forces are going to be very busy with security for the Olympics, the Diamond Jubilee and more tours of Afghanistan and this will make families and service personnel feel pretty unloved and undervalued."

The full article can be found on our website: www.nff.org.uk.

Questions that naturally fall from the announcements revolve around the role and remit of the AFPRB.

They have done an amazing job over the last few years and in our view must be liberated to continue to do so.

What do you think?

■ Women allowed to serve on submarines:

The Secretary of State for Defence, Philip Hammond, has announced that women are to be allowed to serve on Royal Navy submarines for the first time.

The decision comes following an 18-month review conducted by the Royal Navy, which included contribution from submariner families via the NFF, looking at the legal, operational, health, social, technical and financial issues of allowing women to serve on submarines.

Women had previously been excluded from submariner roles due to concerns about higher levels of carbon dioxide in a submarine atmosphere being a risk to female health.

But recent research by the Institute of Naval Medicine showed that these risks were unfounded and that there were no medical reasons for excluding women from service on submarines.

Currently, more than nine per cent of Royal Navy personnel are female, approximately 3,420, with the first female submariners expected to take up their posts towards the end of 2013.

Further information can be found via our website: www.nff.org.uk

If you have any questions or concerns you would like to raise on this matter please contact the NFF, tel: 02392 654374, e-mail: admin@nff.org.uk

■ Forward slash community...

All change for families using the Royal Navy's virtual community website.

With the launch of the new look Royal Navy website any families who want to either join the virtual community or continue to use it will need to make sure that you have registered on the new website.

Is it easy to find? Follow your nose to the 'community' section on the Royal Navy website, you will need the Service number of your Serving Person to register.

Let us know what you think about the new look community facilities – www.royalnavy.mod.uk/

■ Pupil Premium in England

Each January schools conduct a census. Schools with children of Serving personnel can receive a Pupil Premium of £200 per child, per year.

Please take action to make sure



that your school has the correct information recorded so that they can claim the Pupil Premium to help support your children.

For more information on the Pupil Premium please go to www.nff.org.uk and click on the 'education' button.

If you want to know how the school is spending the Pupil Premium we would recommend that you write to the Chair of Governors asking them.

If you have any worries or don't get a response, then please get in touch and tell us. We want to know.

■ Package of Support for the Armed Forces Community in Wales

The Minister with responsibility for the Armed Forces in Wales, Carl Sargeant, has announced the range of measures set out for the community by the Welsh Government.

Mr Sargeant said: "The Welsh Government is committed to increasing the support we provide to the Armed Forces community in Wales."

"This document sets out how we are supporting the Armed Forces in Wales, their families and veterans in key areas that are devolved such as healthcare, housing and education."

"In Wales there are estimated to be at least a quarter of a million members of the Armed Forces Community, which includes serving personnel, reservists and cadets as well as their families and ex-service personnel."

"As a Government we want to ensure that they suffer no disadvantage."

"I hope the support outlined in this document, which will be revised as and when new initiatives are agreed, will go a long way in achieving this."

The link to the Welsh Government's published document can be found via www.nff.org.uk

If you are one of those Royal Navy or Royal Marines families living in Wales tell us what more

could Wales do for you?

■ Money Advice Service

Money Advice Service provides free, clear, independent and unbiased advice to help people make informed financial choices.

Their website offers a wide range of tools and resources, including a financial health check and personalised action plan.

You can also get advice over the phone on: 0300 500 5000, and face-to-face across the UK through a national network.

Website: healthcheck.moneyadviceservice.org.uk or visit www.nff.org.uk and follow the links.

■ The Big White Wall

Over 1,000 Service men and women, veterans and their families have joined www.bigwhitewall.com since its official launch in September. The Big White Wall is a pioneering online wellbeing service for people who are feeling low or depressed.

The service is available for free to the Service community and offers help and support in a variety of ways, including online counsellors and peer support.

Support is available 24/7 and users can talk anonymously to others who may have gone through similar experiences.

■ Homeport

The new edition of *Homeport* magazine is out, the one with six Jewels of the Fleet! Well, five, if you take out HMS Victory on the front cover! Featuring amongst the packed pages articles on JPA Fraud, Redundancy & Housing Advice plus your Q&As...

Either pick up your free copy or contact the NFF to have the magazine delivered free of charge to you and your family's address.

Your experiences form the basis of all our discussions.

To get in touch with the NFF: e-mail: admin@nff.org.uk, Tel: 02392 654374 or write to: Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.

Clarion call for Covenant

IT seems that the implications of the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) are still to be firmly understood among members of the Royal Navy.

The Naval Secretary sent out a Galaxy message (2011/40) in November to clarify the background to the Covenant and what it means to RN and RM personnel and their families.

The Covenant outlines the government's aspiration that no one in the Armed Forces community should suffer disadvantage in accessing public or commercial services because of their military commitment, and that they should, where appropriate, receive special treatments.

These principles have been enshrined in law with the existence of the Covenant recognised in statute.

Successes so far achieved include:

- a Pupil Premium for Service children;
- a new annual £3 million to support state schools with large numbers of Service children;
- a £30 million grant for community projects that benefit both the Service and local community;
- an increase in council tax relief to 50 per cent for personnel on deployed qualifying operations;
- launching a Troops to

Teachers scheme to encourage Service leavers into teaching;

■ doubling the operational allowance;

■ changes to the Rest and Recuperation leave policies to ensure that days missed in the UK for operational reasons are added to Post Operational Leave;

■ the launch of the Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship Scheme;

■ considerable improvements to mental healthcare.

If you are having difficulties in accessing public or commercial services, you should first contact your Divisional Officer and raise the issue through your chain of command.

Another avenue open to both you and your family is the Naval Families Federation which provides advice and support on a range of issues.

The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) and Service charities can provide similar advice for veterans.

As well as feeding back via the chain of command, if you have a particular issue, such as a school place allocation, there is a route to recourse with your local authority.

You will need to raise the issue with your local ombudsman, and details of this process can be found on the local authority's website. It may look daunting, but the process is straightforward.

Jill joins the Silent Service

THE Defence Secretary Philip Hammond announced on December 8 that women were to be allowed to serve in submarines for the first time in the history of the Silent Service.

First Sea Lord Sir Mark Stanhope sent out a Galaxy message to all personnel regarding mixed manning in submarines (Galaxy 43-2011).

He outlined the review process of the last 18 months, saying: "My primary objective in making this change has been to maintain our operational effectiveness now and in the future."

He added: "I know and understand that many of you and your families will have questions, ranging from the policy aspects to the practical implications of women serving at sea to why we are making this change at this time."

"The command chain has been provided with detailing briefing, for onward cascade to answer the immediate questions that you may have."

"In addition, RASM (Rear Admiral Submarines) and DRASM (Deputy to the Rear Admiral Submarines) will be arranging wider meetings for submariners and their families to discuss the issues in greater depth."

Pension planning

THE Second Sea Lord has written to staff in Galaxy 39/2011 updating them on the current situation with the future Armed Forces Pension Scheme.

Vice Adm Charles Montgomery says that negotiations with the Government are ongoing, and he expects to be able to provide more detail in the New Year.

A series of consultations with members of the Armed Forces are expected to begin imminently.

When new information becomes available, it will be cascaded through the command chain.

Search and Rescue moves to Transport

AN announcement in late November from the Transport Secretary outlined government plans to move search and rescue services entirely under the Department for Transport and to make the service fully civilian.

A study is now under way with respect to the future of military aircrew, engineers and maintainers from the Sea King community.

See Galaxy 42-2011 and DIB 98/2011 for more information.

Care of the under 18s

A NEW DIN has been issued on the care of Service personnel under the age of 18.

It outlines the legal and welfare responsibilities that specifically relate to those people aged under 18, although much of the advice could be applicable to older people who are new to the Services.

In addition, it defines the operational deployment terms of people under the age of 18 and appropriate steps to be taken.

It also gives a breakdown of principles regarding contact with parents.

See DIN 2011DIN01-233 for more information.

Procurement under the hammer

THERE are major changes ahead for future procurement processes.

Galaxy 41-2011 outlines what is coming up, including the introduction of Aspect, a new contract management tool.

This new system is expected to go live this month for Navy Command, and has already been rolled out to the RAF and Army.

For more information, the Navy Command Aspect focal point can be reached on 93832 5509 or 3542.

Fresh start for officer training

NEXT month will see the first Initial Naval Training (Officers) course delivered at Britannia Royal Naval College, replacing the Initial Officer Training 09.

The new course (INT(O)) is a 30-week course split into three phases: militarisation; marination; and initial fleet time.

The first ten-week phase of militarisation covers all the Initial Military Training (Ratings) building blocks, including two weeks in HMS Raleigh, although officer cadets work longer days and complete additional leadership and maritime training.

The second ten-week phase of marination is focused primarily on leadership and sea-based training, before the succeeding nine weeks of Initial Fleet Time.

The final week includes the Passing Out parade.

Working with this new system, BRNC will run three 15-week terms, allowing for entry at four points in the year – February, May, September and November.

The introduction of this course completes the interim stage of the Initial Naval Training programme.

The Navy Board continues to support the concept of a single Royal Navy Phase 1 site in due course.

Information is currently being gathered across the training estate for an investment appraisal due to be finished early in 2013.

Royal Marines initial training remains unaffected.

where to look

GALAXY MESSAGES

Galaxy 38-2011: Personal from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope – End of Op Ellamy/Op Unified Protector

Galaxy 39-2011: Future Armed Forces Pension Scheme

Galaxy 40-2011: The Armed Forces Covenant: Personal note from NavSec.

Galaxy 41-2011: Major changes to future procurement processes

Galaxy 42-2011: Future Provision of Search and Rescue Helicopters Capability for the UK

Galaxy 43-2011: Personal note from 1SL: Mixed manning in submarines

Galaxy 44-2011: Initial Naval Training (Officers)

DEFENCE INTERNAL BRIEFS

DIB 2011/91: Operation Unified Protector and Op Ellamy

DIB 2011/95: Director General Human Resources and Corporate Services writes to staff to launch the Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) 2012-2014

DIB 2011/96: Army rebasing and endorsement of the regional restructuring plan

DIB 2011/98: Search and Rescue Helicopters (SAR-H) Project to proceed under Department for Transport responsibility

DIB 2011/99: Afghanistan – announcement of the second tranche of transition areas

DIB 2011/100: Public Sector Pay Awards – Service Personnel

DIB 2011/101: Public Sector Pay Awards – Civilian Personnel

DIB 2011/102: Armed Forces Redundancy Programme – Announcement of Tranche 2

DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES

DIN 2011 DIN01-211: Director General Human Resources and Corporate Services writes to staff to launch the Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) 2012-2014

DIN 2011 DIN01-220: Ship and Naval Air Squadron Command Examination and Qualification Process

DIN 2011 DIN01-226: Future Armed Forces Pension Scheme

DIN 2011 DIN01-226: Future Armed Forces Pension Scheme

DIN 2011 DIN01-223: BR3 – Issue of October 2011 Edition

DIN 2011 DIN01-233: Policy on the Care of Service Personnel Under the Age of 18

DIN 2011 DIN01-231: The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Bank Holiday and The Queen's Birthday Privilege Day for 2012

DIN 2011 DIN01-230: Criminal Injuries Compensation (Overseas) Scheme (CIC(O))

DIN 2011 DIN01-235: Tax Changes and Pensions

DIN 2011 DIN01-236 : Medical Employability Standards for Naval Service Personnel

DIN 2011 DIN01-238: Change to PAX Scheme effective from December 1 2011

DIN 2011 DIN01-239: Naval Service Officers – Changes to OJAR Reporting Periods

DIN 2011 DIN01-241: Early Years Foundation Stages (EYFS) in Overseas Settings – Policy

DIN 2011 DIN03-037: Recovery of Human Remains Following an Incident at Sea or on Water

ROYAL NAVY TEMPORARY MEMORANDA

Issue 16/11 RNTM 307/11: Ship/Naval Air Squadron Command Examinations January 2012 – December 2012

Issue 16/11 RNTM 308/11: ME551 – SWAGELOK Coupling Course

Issue 16/11 RNTM 309/11: Navy Command's Approach To Handling Risk Associated With Information Assets

Issue 16/1 RNTM 310/11: Portsmouth Gas Turbine Forum

● A jungle Sea King at work in Afghanistan

Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill



Naval 'Oscars' honour BBC journalist and 845 NAS

ONE of the country's leading journalists has earned a 'Naval Oscar' for championing the Royal Navy's global mission.

BBC defence correspondent Caroline Wyatt received the most-coveted trophy in maritime journalism – the Desmond Wettern Media Award – from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope at a ceremony in London last night.

Caroline was singled out for more than a decade's contributions on radio and television, from accompanying Arctic convoy veterans to Russia to reporting on the front line in Iraq and Afghanistan and in the ongoing struggle against pirates in the Indian Ocean.

Last year, after many months of negotiations, she was given access to HMS Astute to highlight the new submarine's importance to the nation's defence and security. More recently she sailed back with HMS Liverpool at the end of the destroyer's seven-month deployment off Libya.

It was, she said, "a memorable and humbling experience."

"Few on board had anticipated the intensity of their engagement in the conflict, yet all had relished the challenge, despite being separated from their families for long periods."

Graduates gather at Wiltshire

WILTSHIRE College in Salisbury celebrated the graduation of its Royal Naval students in Salisbury Cathedral.

"It has been another very successful year for the RN students studying with Wiltshire College Salisbury," said Stuart Thornborough, the RN Professional Programmes Coordinator and Tutor.

"Seventeen students are now eligible to graduate, having completed their level 5 and 7 degree and postgraduate level management qualifications in this academic year."

Ten attended the graduation ceremony, along with VIP guest Cdre Mark Slawson, CO of HMS Sultan, while the remainder were unable to be present due to overseas commitments or deployment duties.

In addition there are a further 34 RN students who continue to undertake CMI Management NVQ and Diploma studies with the Salisbury campus of the college.

Dean Rogers, Professional Programmes Tutor, said: "This is positive proof of the Service

"As we saw in Libya, what the Royal Navy does may not always be visible to those back at home, but it plays a hugely important role in our nation's defence and the UK's ability to project power and influence beyond our shores."

Of her award – named in honour of the late Desmond Wettern, Fleet Street's last naval correspondent and a champion of the Senior Service – she said: "I am utterly delighted and honoured to have been nominated for this award. I think it's very important that we at the BBC ensure that we cover the vital work of the Royal Navy properly on our news bulletins."

"It has always been a pleasure and a privilege to be given the opportunity to film and talk to the men and women who serve in the Royal Navy with such huge professionalism and immense enthusiasm."

More than 200 senior officers, journalists, writers, authors, celebrities and business figures attended the Maritime Media Awards at the Institute of Directors.

As well as presenting the main trophy, Admiral Stanhope also recognised other contributions over the past 12 months to highlight the importance of the sea to Britain's prosperity and the selfless actions of the Royal

Navy and the Royal Marines in protecting the nation's interests.

Other awards were:

The Donald Gosling Award for the best TV, radio or film contribution: Spencer Kelly for *Titanic: The Mission*.

The Mountbatten Maritime Award for the best literary contribution: Professor David Abulafia for *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean*

Maritime Fellowship Award for an outstanding lifetime's contribution: author and historian Capt Richard Woodman

Desmond Wettern Fleet Award for the best media contribution from the Royal Navy or Royal Marines: 845 Naval Air Squadron.

The latter were chosen ahead of other squadrons, ships, units and establishments for their efforts in Afghanistan – from where they have just returned.

845 was one of two naval squadrons deployed for more than four years in Helmand in support of the international peacekeeping mission.

The Yeovilton-based squadron's Commanding Officer Cdr Jolyon Woodard collected the trophy – a cut-glass ship's decanter mounted on a plinth of oak from HMS Victory – on behalf of his comrades.

"I am delighted that 845 has



● Gillian Wettern presents the Fleet Award to 845 Naval Air Squadron's CO Cdr Jolyon Woodard

been chosen, reflecting public recognition for the extraordinary fears that the men and women of the squadron continue to deliver, day in, day out, both at home and abroad," he added.

Navy sharpens life skills for teenagers

THE Navy's Fit for Life team (F4L) have been awarded the title of Best Community Supporter at the National Citizen Service Awards in London in November.

CPO Stevie Milne, LPT Kelly Gooch and PO Nicola Harper accepted the award on behalf of the whole Captain Naval Recruiting team for their hard work on the scheme in the Portsmouth area.

The Navy team supported the Respect Programme in Eastney with the National Citizen Service (NCS) project in summer 2011 which offered young people the chance to develop their leadership skills, and stay at Grange Fort in HMS Sultan.

Before the start of the project, the chosen 15 young people attended HMS Collingwood for leadership training using the assault course, as well as honing their swimming, orienteering and kayaking skills.

The second week of the scheme saw the youngsters experience Naval life in HMS Sultan, cooking their own meals in the mess and taking part in training and fitness sessions.

CPO Stevie Milne, the RN Course coordinator, said: "This was a fantastic opportunity for these young people to work alongside some positive role models and sample life in the Senior Service."

"In their short time working alongside my team we hoped to instil a sense of loyalty to their community, develop their self-confidence and inspire them to make a positive contribution to society."

"The RN Fit for Life ethos was our primary focus in delivering this course whilst encouraging them to lead an active and healthy lifestyle."

Redundancy applications begin this month

THE window for applications for compulsory redundancy for the last major tranche of redundancies opens this month on January 17, and closes at the end of February.

January 17 will see the publication of DINs detailing the arrangements for Tranche 2 of the Armed Forces Redundancy Programme.

This will be the last tranche of redundancy for the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force – although there is a possibility that further redundancies may be required as Defence Transformation continues.

The DINs will list the fields from which selection will be made and from which applicants will be sought.

Notification to those personnel selected will be issued on June 12, from which point applicants will be given notice of six months and non-applicants notice of up to 12 months.

Anyone who wishes to leave earlier may apply to do so.

Deaths

Gordon 'George' Fredrick Garman. POAF A/E FAA. Served 1948-55 at Royal Arthur and Implacable also RNAS St Merryn, Bramcote, Lossiemouth and Yeovilton (Pilot's Mate course). Joined 803 Squadron at RNAS Ford and served HMS Eagle, Albion, Centaur and RNAS Hal Far (Malta) where he and his wife Pauline lived ashore and made many good friends on 803 Squadron. October 28. Aged 81.

James 'Jim' Lodge. Having lied about his age in a bid to fight in World War 2 he joined the Royal Navy and served in Diadem on Russian convoys. Post-war he became a manager for NAAFI then served as a diver on a minesweeper patrolling the English Channel before signing up to the Army when the Korean War broke out. After serving 13 years as a Portsmouth councillor he was elected Lord Mayor in 1987. November 4. Aged 85.

Raymond Rudge. Able Seaman. Served 1948-55 in Newcastle (Korean Crisis 1950-52). Diver and coastal forces MTBs (Portsmouth). Member of Coastal Forces Veterans Association and HMS Newcastle Association. November 14. Aged 81.

Len Cummings. AB. Served in Mandate. Algerines Association. November 26. Aged 86.

Anthony Burquest. AB. Served aboard Michael. Algerines Association. November 27. Aged 84.

Philip John Coles. NA1, AH3(D). Served 1964-73. Joined Ganges then Naval Air Stations Seahawk (848 Squadron), Osprey and Goldcrest; also Albion (848 Squadron) and Ark Royal. Aircraft Handlers Association. November. Aged 62.

Mick Maslen. AB. Served in Cheviot 1956 and a member of the association. November 16.

Philip King. PO Cook. Served 1964-86 in Raleigh, Pembroke, Osprey, Bulwark, Seahawk, Jaguar, Royal Arthur, Lowestoft, Llandaff, Fearless, Blake, Nubian, Neptune, NATO (Brussels), Broadsword and Drake. October 21.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Joseph Sharples. Served LCTs 849, 896, 974 and 975, also Ceylon. President Trafford branch. October 21. Aged 87.

George Douglas Lander MM. CSM 42 Commando. Served in Iceland, West Africa and north-west Europe. Southend on Sea RMA and RNA. November 8. Aged 94.

Joseph Simon Pemberton. Served 1941-45 on Atlantic Convoys, Landing Craft and LSTs in the Mediterranean; also based for a time in Norfolk, Virginia, USA. Member of Landing Craft Association and North Manchester RNA. November 11. Aged 88.

John F. Williamson. Leading Seaman. Served 1953-63 in Ganges, Implacable, Delight, Excellent, Ranees, Puma, Wildfire and Mull of Kintyre. Member of HMS Ganges Association and Beccles RNA. November 15. Aged 71.

Michael Razey. PO GI. Served 1939-53. Boy Seaman Ganges and on board Ark Royal when she was sunk; also served in Winchelsea, Shah, Wolf, Vengeance and Ceylon. Founder member Lichfield RNA. November 24. Aged 89.

Richard Rendell. LEM. Served 1950-64 and on board HMY Britannia for eight years and a member of the Association of Royal Yachtsmen, the Algerines Association and Lichfield RNA. November 22. Aged 77.

Ron Tremlett. National Life Vice President, Area Life Vice President and Bristol Branch President. November 18.

Eugene Johnson. Joined the RN 1948 and served in Corunna, Whirlwind, Bury Head, Royal Arthur, St Angelo and Pembroke. Windsor branch. November 20.

Edwin 'Eddie' Pykett. WW2 Stoker. Conscripted into RN and served in Manchester during Operation Pedestal, after which he was taken as an Italian POW for a few months. Later took part in the Normandy landings while serving aboard Emerald. Lincoln branch. Aged 93.

Sports lottery

November 19: £5,000 – Lt G I Richards; £1,500 – Rear Admiral N R Lambert; £500 – AB1 D A Sullivan.

November 26: £5,000 – PO N D Bentley; £1,500 – LH B Clilverd; £500 – LH W L Greenlees.

December 3: £5,000 – Lt S Parrott; £1,500 – Lt Cdr M L Thomson; £500 – PO S G Alderson.

Assignments

Capt Martin J. Connell to be CO HMS Illustrious from January 5 2012.

Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

■ Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.

■ There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

■ Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

■ Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Ask Jack

HMS Tamar: Former Wrens Kate Warren and Babs Blacklock would like to make contact with any Wren who lived in Bonham Towers during '72 and '73. Also any VMs or ship's crew resident or visiting ships who remember us. Contact Kate at kati@squeely.co.uk or on 07801 063245 or Babs at barbarablacklock@msn.com or on 07795 805573.

HMS Dorsetshire: Derek Bidgood and his sister would appreciate any information regarding their father's death. Chief Shipwright William John Bidgood aged 42, killed on April 5 1942 when Dorsetshire was sunk by enemy action. Did he go down with the ship or was he one of the 16 who died in the water afterwards? Please contact Derek Bidgood at derek.bidgood@btinternet.com or tel: 01752 707346.

Reunions

JANUARY 2012

HMS Illustrious Association: Annual Service of Remembrance will be held at St Mary Aldermay, Bow Lane, London on January 17, 2012 from 1300 to 1400. Contact Mrs Frances Garton at frances.garton@virginmedia.com or tel: 07985 196908.

MARCH 2012

HMS Diana Association: Reunion will be held from March 2 to 4 at the Park House Hotel, Blackpool. As members know from previous reunions at the Park House we always have a great turnout and a fantastic time, so please book early, anyone who has not got a hotel booking form please contact the Secretary at johnjackie.fisher@talktalk.net or 01163678360. Please don't leave it to late and be disappointed.

HMS Indefatigable Association: Celebrates its 25th anniversary at its 2012 annual reunion, from March 23 to 25, at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth. The special silver anniversary dinner will be on March 24, and members of the association will be attending morning service at Portsmouth Cathedral the following day. All are welcome at part or all of the reunion weekend. Those wishing to attend are asked to book in advance through Reunion Secretary Mrs Anne Richards, 11 Erleigh Drive, Chippenham, Wilts, SN15 2NQ, Tel. 01249 661524 or 07584 021243, Email annerichards@btinternet.com. To book accommodation at the RMC, please phone them direct on 023 9283 7681, mentioning the Association reunion when you do so.

APRIL 2012

Captain Class Frigate Association: Reunion at the Warwick Hilton, Stratford Road, Warwick. Book direct on 01926 499555. The reunion runs from April 12 to 15. Contact Don Hitchcock on 01676 534719.

HMS Dunkirk Association: Annual reunion from April 21 to 22 at the Royal Hotel, Whitby. For more information contact Jackie Carroll at jcarroll@jandecarroll.plus.com or tel: 01692 678721.

Falklands: Plymouth Guildhall will be hosting a Scale Model Exhibition on April 28 from 1000 to 1630. The event will have several models commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Falklands campaign. All military personnel are invited to attend. Free entry into the event can be gained by wearing your Falklands medals. More details from Dave Watson on 01752 518287 (home) 01752 811250 (work).

HMS Protector Association: Hold their 13th Grand Annual Reunion and AGM at the Suncliff Hotel, Bournemouth from April 20 to 23. Further details and booking forms available from Doug Harris at dougatspindrift@aol.com or via the website at <http://www.hmsprotector.org/> or tel: 01495 718870.

Competitions

Jackspeak Competition

Translate the term 'gen dit' into layman's English. Three winners will each receive a copy of *Jackspeak*.

Mr Robbie Hodgson, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland – "True Story"

Norman Davies, Buryton, Hampshire "A written or spoken account of a true event in a sailor's life"

Mr D A Wilkinson, Beeston, Nottingham – "Genuine story (or account)"

Type 45 Character Building HM Armed Forces competition

Winners of the Type 45 and Miniature figures/characters: Correct answer HMS Duncan

Winner of the Type 45 model set is Emma Relton, RNAS Culdrose.

Ten runners-up win five random characters each and the winners are: Ewen Napier, Edinburgh; Alister Witt, Havant, Hampshire; John Quinn, Orpington, Kent; Michael Holland, Portsmouth, Hampshire; J H Sparkes, Taunton, Somerset; Don Taylor, Filton, Bristol; Dylan Whelan, Helston, Cornwall; John Richards, Canterbury, Kent; Lt Col R Jarman, London; Stephen King, Baldock.

Noticeboard online

THE new Navy News website offers an online Noticeboard where you can post details of your events, reunions and questions to the online community.

To get your message online, you just have to register using your own email address, then you can post your message; in time this will appear live on

the site, and people can reply directly with information.

If you want your posting also to appear in print in the Navy News newspaper, please include your postal address and phone number – this detail will not be included in the forum message, but is needed for the printed edition.

Visit www.navynews.co.uk.

1972 1982 1992 2002 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...



● HMS Stubbington in her new guise as RNR ship HMS Montrose amid the Western Isles of Scotland

January 1972

THE minesweeper HMS Stubbington left Portsmouth flying her paying-off pennant to begin her new life in Dundee.

The 425-ton ship was to be renamed HMS Montrose and was destined for a new career as a coastal minesweeper with the Royal Naval Reserve.

Stubbington had the distinction of having been driven and navigated by more officers than any other ship in the Fleet, as she had spent two years as Naval Home Command's training ship for navigators and commanding officers.

Built by Camper and Nicholson in Southampton and launched in 1957, Stubbington had spent 12 years of her naval life in the Mediterranean.

January 1982

THE Navy's newest fishery protection ship, HMS Leeds Castle, was undergoing her first trials and exercises in the North Sea with a troop of soldiers joining her ship's company.

Men from the 1st Battalion, The Queen's Regiment were working alongside the sailors at the invitation of the ship, as the Regiment recruited its men from the Leeds Castle area of Kent.

None of the 18 soldiers was seasick, even in the choppy conditions the ship experienced as she operated from Rosyth.

The tests of new equipment included practice with an inflatable launch which could travel at more than 40 knots.

January 1992

TAOIST priests chanted prayers and burned incense and a Lion Dance team beat cymbals and drums as work officially started on the new Hong Kong naval base on Stonecutter's island.

The base was to be a replacement for the existing facilities at HMS Tamar, the Navy's long-established home.

After the symbolic breaking of ground at what was to become the stores area of the new base, three roast pigs were carved up and served to bring good luck to the project.

The new base was expected to be ready for occupation by March 1993.

January 2002

MORE than 700 million people across the globe tuned in to listen when student engineers from Thunderer Squadron recreated the legendary moment of the first transatlantic wireless signal sent from Cornwall to Canada 100 years before.

The trainee engineers borrowed a 1914 Navy Type 2 rotary spark gap transmitter from HMS Collingwood's Communications and Radar museum and took it to Poldhu Cove to send three bursts of the letter S (three dots) in Morse Code.

It was the signal which Marconi claimed to hear in Newfoundland in December 1901 (whether he really did hear it has been disputed ever since.)

The team of engineering sponsorship students from Southampton University employed some ingenuity when they found some components of the transmitter failed to work.

They bought some rolls of tinfoil from the local supermarket and the officer in charge of the project, Lt Mickey Rooney, painstakingly crafted it into a new component, which worked perfectly.

Lt Rooney said later he had introduced a new unit of scientific measurement, as he estimated the transmitter had the capacitance of about 30 turkeys.

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in February's Noticeboard must be received by **January 11**

NOTICEBOARD



Trophy lives



Trophy No 13,116 is a watercolour of the first HMS Ajax by Eric Tufnell; she was a 3rd rate ship carrying 74 guns and had been built in Portsmouth Dockyard in 1767.

In January 1782 she was under the command of Captain Nicholas Charrington, and formed part of a 22-ship Fleet commanded by Rear Admiral Sir Samuel Hood in the West Indies.

She was to be one of the participants at the Battle of St Kitts, also known as the Battle of Frigate Bay.

On January 24 Hood's ships were to the south east of the island of Nevis when the French 16-gun cutter Espion was spotted off the neighbouring island of St Kitts; Espion was soon captured and found to be carrying ammunition for the French troops besieging the Brimstone Hill fort on St Kitts.

The following morning saw the French Fleet of 26 ships, under the command of Vice-Admiral Comte de Grasse, standing south of Basse Terre on the south western coast of St Kitts.

Hood manoeuvred his ships towards the French with the apparent intention of engaging them; this led the French to move into more open waters.

A favourable – and fortunate – change in the wind gave Hood the opportunity to enter the anchorage of Frigate Bay, or Basse Terre, so recently vacated by Admiral de Grasse and once his vessels were in the desired formation they

anchored.

On January 26 the French made three separate and vigorous attacks on the British; each was successfully repulsed while the enemy vessels suffered severe damage and considerable casualties. During these attacks Ajax lost one man killed and had 12 wounded.

Once the island of Nevis had surrendered to the French they were able to ship the guns to St Kitts to intensify the siege of the fortress of Brimstone Hill.

Admiral Hood managed to remain at anchor in Frigate Bay for a further fortnight but – in spite of having got the better of Admiral de Grasse – he was unable to prevent the island surrendering to the French and after a month of siege the heavily outnumbered and isolated British garrison was forced to surrender on February 12 1782.

Unable to assist in any way Admiral Hood sailed from St Kitts and joined forces with Admiral Rodney.

A year later, the 1783 Treaty of Paris restored St Kitts and Nevis to British rule; Brimstone Hill was subsequently strengthened and never fell to an enemy force again – today it is a World Heritage Site.

HMS Ajax was finally sold out of service in 1785 by which time she had accumulated four battle honours; in addition to the Battle of St Kitts she also fought at the Battles of Cape St Vincent, the Chesapeake and the Saintes.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk
Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veterans-uk.info
RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, navysearhpgprc@tnt.co.uk
Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, www.rnrmc.org.uk
RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk
British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org.uk
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The children are aged between 10½/11 and 18 (P7 to S6), the main intake being at Primary 7.

The school offers its pupils a wide and balanced curriculum following the Scottish educational system and includes courses at Standard, Intermediate 2 and Higher Grades of the Scottish Certification of Education.

Pupils also have the opportunity to study in a number of subjects for the Advanced Higher examinations.

Increasingly, pupils move on to Higher and Further Education but career links with the Services remain strong.

Pastoral care is given a very high priority along with careers guidance and personal and social education.

Queen Victoria School aims to provide a stable 'home from home' environment, promote the welfare and happiness of each individual child and develop their self-esteem.

In addition, there is a very full programme of sporting, cultural and spiritual development.

Queen Victoria School is a unique boarding school which seeks to achieve the best that is possible for its pupils.

The school prides itself on developing the pupils in the widest possible sense and aims to achieve success academically, in sport, music, drama and many other extra-curricular areas.

A very special and unique dimension of Queen Victoria School is the ceremonial side which preserves the very best of the school's traditions.



Boys can now board at Stover School

AS COMMITTED, professional, educators Stover School believes that within any learning community there should be a continuous search for development and growth.

Through Academic and Pastoral Boards, the school has been monitoring and evaluating the educational provision offered to pupils and believes it can do more.

Boarding continues to be a central and growing part of life at Stover and the school is delighted to announce that a bespoke boarding house is being developed in a part of Clock House, designed to accommodate an additional 14 boarders.

Stover's fine reputation and tradition of boarding has enabled expansion in this area of the school and it looks forward to the opportunity to welcome boys as well as girls into the boarding community.

Mrs C Walliker, Chair of Governors, explained: "Now that boys and girls are successfully integrated throughout the Senior

School we have begun to explore the merits of 'setting' our pupils on the basis of ability rather than gender.

"We believe that as a fully co-educational school we will be able to offer our pupils a comprehensive, forward-thinking, curriculum that will maximise each individual's academic potential.

"Together with the traditional values we all believe are so important, and our Christian ethos, we will continue to ensure that our pupils are fully prepared for life in the 21st century both academically and socially."

The Board of Governors is fully committed to providing the very best educational experience for all pupils, at all stages of their education, and know that the demand for an independent education, such as Stover School provides, continues to be high.

The Governors believe that the planned changes are essential to ensure the school sustains its current strong position and long-term success.

Blundell's long history

BLUNDELL'S School, founded in 1604, occupies a spacious site on the outskirts of the market town of Tiverton. It is fully co-educational and accepts pupils from age 11 to 18, all of whom are assigned to a House which has boarders (full, weekly and flexi) and day pupils.

Pupils will always perform to their full potential if they are happy and feel secure. The school is immensely proud of the caring environment which Blundell's provides; the boarding ethos underpins all aspects of school life.

At the last inspection Blundell's was graded by OFSTED Inspectors

as outstanding in all six categories, a fantastic achievement.

A-level results for pupils in 2011 were extremely pleasing: 91 per cent A* to C. At GCSE 95 per cent of results were at A* to C, again a fantastic set of results and a reflection of the commitment of pupils and staff.

Blundell's has a richly-deserved reputation in both girls and boys sport.

There is a broad and extensive fixture list for all sports and many Blundellians represent their county with a few reaching national levels in a variety of sports.

Boarding Forces Discount Offered

"Excellence in teaching and nurturing of pupils lie at the heart of all we do at Stover."
Mrs Sue Bradley, Principal

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There are extensive playing fields, an indoor swimming pool and a dedicated fencing Salle. Music and drama flourish and the 2010-11 building programme has included a new music school and theatre.

The boarding houses are modern and comfortable and the experienced house staff provides a warm and supportive environment for all the boys and girls.

You want the best for your child and so do Wellington.



West Hill Park prepares children for their future

AMONGST other aims, West Hill Park exists to prepare children for the next stage of their education.

This is a most important and highly-valued part of the experience that the school provides for both children and parents and yet it is an area that can easily be overlooked in the excitement of the wider education that the pupils receive.

The Senior Independent Schools' Exhibition is an important early stage of this process and allows parents to speak to representatives from the Senior Schools before choosing schools to visit.

The school has representatives from Bryanston, Canford, Clayesmore, King's College

Taunton, Lancing College, Lord Wandsworth College, Milton Abbey School, Ryde School, The Gregg School and The Royal Hospital School.

Pupils are continually but unobtrusively assessed and monitored during their time at West Hill Park.

This shared information helps guide parents to make carefully informed choices about future schooling.

If you would like to see what West Hill Park has to offer your child from 2½ to 13 or attend the Senior Independent Schools Exhibition for advice regarding the 'next stage' on Saturday, March 17, the school would be delighted to welcome you.


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The sports facilities include a swimming pool, gym, running track, rugby and cricket pitches, as well as a shooting range and outdoor assault course.

Duke of York is proud of the

pupils' academic achievements. The school's GCSE results are double the national average: in 2011, over 90 per cent of pupils gained five or more GCSE grades A*-C or equivalents, including English and Mathematics, with over 95 per cent passing at A-level. More than 90 per cent of students choose to go on to university.

With a focus on leadership, self-discipline, respect and teamwork; ceremonial parades, the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme and Combined Cadet Force activities are at the heart of the school.

As the school is full boarding, your child will never be bored as they are kept busy with over 70 clubs and activities to choose from.

Trinity's day of review

ON October 3 2011, Lt Gen Sir Robert Fulton RM came to Teignmouth to review the Combined Cadet Force Contingent at Trinity School.

Sir Robert spent the morning afloat in the CCF rib driven by Cadet Cox'n Dominic Ellen with the RN Section in the Teign estuary and beyond Shaldon thanks to Tim and Sue Cox, at the local Seaport RYA Centre with cadets surfing and sailing.

The unit almost had a visit from Lt Cdr Chris Trubshaw Commanding Officer and Lt Cdr Scot Hughes, our Liaison Officer from 849 NAS at Culdrose, the RN Section's Parent Establishment who were to arrive by Sea King helicopter.

Unfortunately while Teignmouth basked in autumnal sunshine, RNAS Culdrose was fogbound. 849 NAS was however duly represented by their Senior Observer Lt Cdr Roger Kennedy who arrived safely by road.

At the end of the day, Sir Robert Fulton congratulated the cadets and staff on the high standards achieved and his final report stated that: "It is the leadership at all levels that is the determining factor and deserves high praise and support from the rest of the Armed Forces."

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Whitehaven helps out veterans

WHILE their junior brethren have been engaged in assessing the chips of the town (*see p43*), Whitehaven unit's more senior Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets were supporting the fifth annual Combat Veterans' Evening held at Cleator Moor Celtic football club.

The cadets spent the evening looking after the veterans, helping serve supper and just chatting with them.

CPO (SCC) Maureen McEuan RNR said: "In 2007 we were invited to support the first Combat Veterans' Evening and it has been a privilege for us to attend every year since."

"Our cadets enjoy speaking to the veterans, who are equally happy to share their memories with them."

The veterans received a hot supper, a free bar all evening and enjoyed some superb entertainment.

Where necessary, transport was provided to get veterans to and from the event, which was funded by donations from numerous individuals and organisations, including main sponsors Morson Group plc.

Pennant for Abingdon

ABINGDON unit has won a coveted pennant for the high standards they have maintained over the past year.

The efficiency award was presented to the unit by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Brig Nigel Moggs, at an official ceremony at the unit.

Ex-Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Phil Pether RNR, who was in charge of the unit at the time, said: "It is a great achievement for the unit to be awarded this pennant, and it is a credit to all the hard work cadets and staff put in throughout 2011."

"The cadets give a lot of time to helping out at local events, and our band is quite popular."

"As a result we were asked again this year to lead the Christmas Extravaganza."

Dartmouth camp – the summer place



IT MIGHT be midwinter, but thoughts are already turning to the 2012 version of one of the most prestigious courses in cadet circles.

LC Wesley Bodman attended the 2011 Dartmouth Summer Camp, held at Britannia Royal Naval College, and here are his thoughts on the course:

"Recently I attended a Combined Cadet Force summer camp at BRNC in Dartmouth."

"There were a total of 240 cadets attending – 180 CCF cadets from all over the country, around 40 Sea Cadets who were selected from the other 14,000 Sea Cadets in the country, and the rest were Sea Scouts."

The purpose of the camp was to give cadets the opportunity to experience a week in the life of a young officer whilst they do their IOT (initial officer training).

During the camp I made full use of many college facilities, including the bridge trainer, a training aid designed to teach the skills needed for an officer of the watch taking charge of a ship by simulating the bridge of a warship.

There were Bosuns, Picos, motor whalers (a big Viking) and the picket boats, which we went out to sea in and had a chance to steer and navigate.

All of these boats were moored down at Sandquay, which was a five-minute walk down a near vertical path from the college.

● Cadets sailing at the Dartmouth Summer Camp

I was also able to use the near full extent of the college's sports facilities with swimming galas and field sports like bucket ball and quick cricket.

On the last day on the parade square the cadets did the 'ramp relay' – and if you've seen a picture of the college you can probably guess what this involves.

On top of the ones that I have listed there were many more activities.

Cadets were never left bored or twiddling their thumbs as the days were always packed from sunrise to sunset with activities I could only ever dream of doing outside of cadets.

Dartmouth summer camp was without doubt the highlight of my Sea Cadet career.

It incorporated all the skills taught to me by Tewkesbury unit over the past six years.

I was tested to my limit, as there was no daily routine and every day was different and more exciting than the last.

When you reach 16 and think you've done everything you can do in Cadets, ask for an application letter for Dartmouth Summer Camp – I guarantee that you will not be disappointed.

You will meet amazing people and do things very few other 16-year-olds can say they've had the privilege of doing.

So put yourself forward and take part in the best camp the SCC has to offer."

For further information on how to apply and what the course offers email training@ms-sc.org

Burgee given by a FOSTie

THE Cadets of Kettering unit have once again lived up to the motto of their adopted unit 800 Naval Air Squadron – *nunquam non paratus*, or 'never unprepared' – when the Director, Flag Officer Sea Training South Capt Mike McCartney visited the unit.

Capt McCartney was at the unit to present a prestigious burgee efficiency award for 2011.

Unit Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Marc Pether RMR said: "It was an honour to have the Director of FOST South visit the unit – even though, having been through FOST previously, I was worried about the rigours of the inspection we would receive."

The cadets provided a Guard of Honour for the full ceremonial divisions, which was followed by a performance by the unit's band.

Capt McCartney then conducted a presentation on the history of the Fleet Air Arm, and gave the cadets an update of the Fleet and how FOST operates within UK territorial waters.

Since becoming 800 NAS, Kettering Sea Cadets has gone from strength to strength, and 2011 has been a very successful year.

Next year look like being as memorable – the unit celebrates 70 years in 2012, and a busy programme is planned.

Successful season at TS Rebel

MORE than 350 RYA and Sea Cadet qualifications over a total of 73 training courses – it has been another busy and successful season for the Cadet Sea School TS Rebel.

The school also saw 59 Duke of Edinburgh's Award certificates awarded as well.

TS Rebel's fleet of eight vessels, together with a new shore-based centre at Titchmarsh Marina in Walton-on-the-Naze, enabled the school to provide a variety of maritime-based courses, including offshore sailing and power, RYA Sailing Instructor, Yachtmaster, chartwork and navigation, keelboat sailing, radio operator, powerboat, yacht racing and Duke of Edinburgh expeditions.

"The wide range of skills and qualifications that our volunteer instructors offer were fully exploited during the year," said TS Rebel's Training Officer Phil London.

"The success rate of the cadets is an indication of how positively they reacted to the challenging training environment that we provided."

School principal Nick Moulton said: "The fact that many courses were oversubscribed, and we also had lots of cadets coming back several times, indicates we are fulfilling a need and that cadets are really keen to get stuck in on the water."

Raising funds – then raising more

NORTHAMPTON and Wellingborough unit's annual bonfire and fireworks evening raised £300 for the replacement of unit boats and the purchase of a new Trinity 500.

And all the while the unit also had the matter of Remembrance ceremonies in mind – a week of helping the Royal British Legion try to hit

their 2010 target of £110,000 (the youngsters raised over £1,000 at the Morrison's Cattle Market site alone this year) was followed by a show of strength at various civic events.

In total, 106 Sea and Royal Marines Cadets and 23 instructors from TS Laforey paraded across the county for Remembrance ceremonies.

Major effort over poppies

CADETS and staff from Hove and Adur unit put in 20 hours of graft on evenings and weekends to collect for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal in the run-up to Remembrance Day.

And their efforts paid off when the donations were totted up, and the grand total was found to be £2,050.

Of that total OC Ross Kentish and his sister JC Caitlin Kentish between them raised more than £400.

Hove and Adur is a thriving unit with 35 cadets which shares its accommodation with the local Army Cadet Force unit, though they parade on separate evenings.

The unit also has its own boating facilities at the port of Shoreham.

But in common with many units, there is always a need for more volunteers to help keep things ticking along nicely.

The Corps aims to help young people towards responsible adulthood and to encourage them to reach their potential by developing valuable personal attributes and high standards of conduct in an organisation which draws on the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy – and all the while having fun!

If anyone is interested in joining they should contact the unit on 07990 591187.

Paul hands over helm at Weston

AFTER nearly 12 years at the helm of Weston unit Lt Cdr (SCC) Paul Main RNR has retired as Commanding Officer.

Paul joined TS Weston at the age of 12, reaching Cadet PO before joining the staff.

After a wide and varied career over many years – which included bandmaster – he took over the top job.

The unit has gone from strength to strength under his leadership, winning burgees 12 years in succession to maintain an unbroken record of 58 years as burgee-holders.

During his time in command Weston won the South West Stephenson Trophy (for being the best unit in the area) five times, the Commodore's Cup once and the top prize, the Canada Trophy as best unit in the Corps, twice.

With the band playing, Lt Cdr Main took the salute of the whole ship's company in a farewell march-past, and he was then ceremoniously towed off ship in the unit's new Trinity 500 by the Royal Marines Cadets (*pictured right*) – at his request, having overseen the start-up of the Royal Marines Cadet Detachment during his last year as Commanding Officer.



Newburn navigate Caledonian Canal (again)



● POs Julie Fleming and Daniel Morgan looking damp on Day 1

AUTUMN half-term saw Newburn unit, along with cadets and staff from Jarrow, Whitley Bay and Newcastle East, take to the waters of the Caledonian Canal for their unit camp.

With nine staff and 23 cadets taking part, this was the fourth time the unit has navigated the canal on a unit camp – and they felt this was the best yet.

The OIC of Newburn, PO (SCC) Darren Tannock, said that apart from the first day (which was very soggy) and the last day (when the wind picked up), the weather for the rest of the week was great.

All cadets enjoyed driving the six motor cruisers, and some even enjoying a spot of fishing – prompting a competition over the week, which

was won by AC Rachel Ford, who landed a young pike.

There were also two fancy-dress-theme days – pirate day and Hawaiian day – with the lock keepers acting as judges.

All cadets gained confidence over the week with simple things like cooking their own meals (cheese and ham toasties became a speciality over the week).

Some gained their RYA Level 1 power qualification, and wildlife spotting yielded positive sightings of wild highland haggis, lowland aquatic sheep and a large purple Nessie.

Preparations have already started to run another such camp on the canal in two years time.



● A rainbow over Loch Lochy



● Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor presents AC Alexander George with his Silver Duke of Edinburgh certificate

Ordinary, but also special

THE Captain of Sea Cadets, Capt Mark Windsor, sees plenty of units 'putting on a show' for their special guest.

So when it came to a visit to Southend unit, the Captain's brief was simple – he wanted to see a unit on a normal parade night and that his visit should not be treated as if it were an inspection.

Southend heeded his request, and as he toured the unit with CO Lt (SCC) Les Hawkins RNR, he saw the cadets on their normal Thursday classes.

These included the Seamanship team preparing for a competition that weekend, the Junior Sea Cadets practising their knots, the Royal Marines Cadets stripping and cleaning the unit's SA80 assault rifles and a team of youngsters practising weapon-handling on the range.

Capt Windsor took the time to sit in on all the classes and spoke to the majority of cadets, including the New Entry intake who had only been members of the unit for a fortnight.

The visit was rounded off when the VIP guest presented 15-year-old AC Alexander George with his Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award certificate.

Lt Hawkins said: "This was a very important occasion for Southend Sea Cadets."

"Although Capt Windsor's brief was that it should be a normal parade night, there is nothing normal about having the Captain of the Corps, a very senior Royal Navy officer, on board."

"The cadets and staff excelled themselves, showing the Captain what they do and how much fun they have doing it."

"With visits from the Captain so rare, it is unlikely that I will still be Commanding Officer for any subsequent visits."

"I am extremely proud of the way the cadets and staff presented themselves and to have had the opportunity to be in command at this time."



● Cadets line the decks of two boats on the Norfolk Broads

Broads education

SEA Cadets, Royal Marines Cadets and Junior Cadets from Gosforth, Caterham and Jarrow units held their joint annual camp on the Norfolk Broads over the half-term holiday.

Almost 70 youngsters from the Northern and Southern Areas spent a week on a fleet of ten boats, cruising the waterways and gaining valuable skills including Cook Steward, Marine Engineering and

Clock turned back to 1805

HARROGATE unit were asked to attend their local Masonic Hall on the evening of October 21.

One of the Masonic Lodges that meets on this night – Doric Lodge – asked the CO, Lt Cdr (SCC) Richard Cockell RNR, if the Sea Cadets could "do something naval".

In the ship's stores were some replica uniforms made by Ann Roberts, wife of the current Harrogate SCC treasurer Mike Roberts.

Ann made the uniforms based on pictures and paintings depicting the uniforms of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines of the day.

The cadets attended the lodge in these 1805 uniforms to pipe in, and escort, the Master of the Lodge prior to their dinner to his seat in the dining room.

At the end of the evening the Doric Lodge held a raffle and the sum collected – £225 – was donated to Harrogate unit.

The unit has also been busy in the wider community, painting the metal gates to Ripon Sailing Club at Farnham.

Used by cadets and staff throughout the summer months for training and working towards boatwork qualifications, the facility is also used by other organisations, so the main entrance comes in for quite a bit of wear and tear.

Cadets and staff did the work 'out of cadet hours' in cold and windy weather, and the Commodore of the club, Jennie Clark, was delighted with the result.

Under the guidance of Mrs Clark, the club – which is based in a former sand quarry – has been very supportive of the unit.



● From left: Harrogate unit's Cdt Jade Wright, Cdt Amy McKinley, A/Cdt Jack Tibballs and Cdt Shannon Hodden

Farnham take plunge with new dive unit

FARNHAM unit has started a diving unit under the current BSAC (British Sub-Aqua Club) regulations, and have already nearly completed their first Ocean Water dive course.

The cadets are being trained by ex-Lt Cdr (SCC) 'Smoothy' Smith RNR, who was the ex-National Staff Officer Diving and instigator of the first cadet dive teams in the country in 1969 with the help of Bob Crewdson, a member of the Metropolitan Police Sub Aqua Club at the time.

Just recently Lt Cdr Smith, who has now rejoined the Cadets, was asked by Bob – himself now a uniformed member of Farnham and currently the unit's First Lieutenant – if it would be possible to get a diving section up and running again.

The pair were founders of the first Dive Acquaint Courses at Horsea Island in Portsmouth and provided the diving element for all summer camps held at HMS Bristol for many years.

And the present National Staff Officer Diving, A/Lt (SCC) George Bailey RNR, based in Liverpool, was one of the first to complete the dive acquaint course when he was a chief petty officer in the early 1990s, and to date is still running the same course that Smoothy and Bob set up.

Farnham is currently being assisted by London and Southern Areas dive teams, and to help get up to speed the unit is appealing

for any former Royal Navy types in the Farnham area who are involved in diving and would be willing to volunteer their services to enable Farnham to be self-sufficient and get the boys and girls into the water.

The unit also has access to a

suitable pool for training.

Smoothy's interest in diving led him to write a book about his career, covering the years from 1956 to the present day.

The book deals with Sea Cadets, RN shallow water to ship's diver, police underwater

search and recovery operations, Joint Services and BSAC diving.

This snapshot of the opportunities available to the diving fraternity is called *So You Want To Be A Diver* – if anyone is interested in seeing it, they should email Smithsmoothy@aol.com



Hole lot of fun at Diggerland

STAFF and cadets from London Eastern District enjoyed a day at Diggerland Adventure Park in Kent (pictured above).

Two young members of staff from Walton-on-the-Naze unit in Essex organised the event to provide the cadets and hard-working volunteers with a well-earned break from their training.

PPO (SCC) Jay Watcham and PO (SCC) Jack Parsons organised the event in preparation for their officer selection process.

Part of the process requires candidates to demonstrate their leadership and organisational skills in tasks that they ordinarily would not undertake – previous tasks have included organising the running of one of the district competitions or similar.

London Eastern District is made up of 11 units

within Essex who work tirelessly towards the training and development of its young people.

Diggerland is an adventure park with a very different theme – JCBs.

It gives its visitors the chance to drive a JCB, dig holes in ground, get thrown about in the back of jeeps, get very dizzy on the Spin Dizzy ride and in general have a full-on day out.

"The sun is shining and everyone has smiles on their faces – a good day is being had by all," said one of the young participants.

The organisers reported: "We loved the opportunity to organise this event."

"It isn't until you are involved in something like this that you actually realise how much work goes into it."

Students at the Royal Albert Hall

STUDENTS from Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College lined the steps of the Royal Albert Hall for the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance.

The eight boys and eight girls are all currently studying for AS and A-levels at the Leicestershire college, and most are destined for careers as engineers or technical officers in the Armed Forces or as civil servants in the MOD.

The group of 16 lined the Royal steps, along which the Queen and royal party entered the hall, and they then went on to take part in the Muster Parade.

The state-of-the-art purpose-built college is situated at Woodhouse, near Loughborough.

Double cash boost from Fred



Prestigious medal for supporter

A West Kent district stalwart has been presented with a much-prized Sea Cadet Corps award.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Peter Luxton RNR received his Sea Cadet Medal from the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Col Peter Bishop (Retd), at a special presentation before the district Trafalgar Parade service in St Michael's Church, Sittingbourne (see foot of next page).

The medal is a very prestigious national honour, given to very few – only four were awarded in 2011 – for their meritorious service to the Corps.

Peter has been involved with the Corps since the age of 12 and has now completed more than 50 years of service in various roles, which included Commanding Officer of Medway Towns unit and District Officer for West Kent.

Current Deputy District Officer Lt (SCC) Steve Small RNR said: "Peter has been an immense personality within West Kent and across the whole of Southern Area, having been an oracle for those seeking advice and guidance and an inspirational role model for those wishing to volunteer with the Sea Cadets."

Trent District on the streets

TRAFALGAR Day was celebrated with a parade and service in Burton-upon-Trent in Staffordshire.

More than 200 cadets and adult volunteers from units in the Trent District took part.

The Saluting Officer, Cdr John Livesey, the Commanding Officer (Port) of Trident missile nuclear submarine HMS Victorious, inspected Number One platoon, which was made up of 24 cadets selected to represent the district at the national Trafalgar parade the following week in London.

S/Lt (SCC) David Nichol RNR, the Commanding Officer of Burton unit, hosted the event and said he was pleased by what he saw and proud of all the cadets on parade.

"They are a credit to the Corps," he said.

Also present was the Mayor of East Staffs Borough Council, Cllr Patricia Ackroyd, accompanied by the Mayor's Cadet, AC Erthan Moorby.

HMS Victorious is affiliated to the town of Burton-on-Trent as well as the town's Sea Cadet unit.

This was the last Trafalgar Parade for Trent District as it is being renamed.

Next year Mansfield unit will host the first Notts and Derby District parade.

Doing their duty

CADETS from Gravesend unit were on duty for Trafalgar Night, with the unit's Corps of Drums calling guests of the Historic Dockyard at Chatham to dinner in the Commissioner's House, where the dinner was hosted by Dockyard Trust chairman Admiral Sir Ian Garnett.

SCARBOROUGH unit president Fred Normandale spent weeks limbering up to take part in the Great North Run.

Fred, a well-known local fisherman, decided he would match any sponsorship that he could raise, with the money going to the unit's building fund.

To the delight of all, Fred raised £2,115, completing the run on Tyneside in 2h 33m.

Staff and cadets assembled on the unit's regular parade night to watch as Fred handed over a cheque for £4230 towards the building fund.

● Scarborough cadets salute unit president Fred Normandale as he hands over a cheque for £4,230

Picture: Scarborough Evening News



● Ropework at the TS Grimsby training weekend

Training before a reshuffle

CADETS and adult volunteers from **Barnsley** unit attended a training weekend at **TS Grimsby**.

Along with other cadets from the **South Yorkshire and Humberside District** they took part in the multi-activity cadet training weekend.

Cadets learnt about Meteorology, Marine Engineering, Ropework, Cook Steward skills, Communications and Rowing.

It was a very successful weekend with all cadets gaining a new qualification.

Cadets had a great weekend on what will be the last for the current district – under a reshuffle, the units of **Grimsby, Immingham and Scunthorpe** join the new district of **Lincolnshire**.

Tributes to Herbert

FOUR cadets and two members of staff from **Loughborough** unit paid tribute to Royal Navy personnel who gave their lives for their country by placing remembrance crosses on the grave of 18-year-old **Herbert Goulden**.

Herbert was an Ordinary Signalman in submarine **E13** in World War 1, and was posthumously awarded the Silver Cross of St George.

E13 ran aground on an island near Copenhagen in Denmark on August 18 1915 and 15 or her sailors died when German destroyers opened fire on her, despite the efforts of Danish torpedo boats to protect her.

The Danes had 14 of the bodies, including that of Herbert Goulden (the 15th was recovered later) brought ashore with due ceremony, and taken back to the UK with a warship escort.

Herbert was buried with full military honours in his home town on August 30 1915.

Unit CO Lt (SCC) Kay Adey RNR said Herbert's age meant cadets could relate to him – particularly as a former member of the unit of the same age is now a serving submariner.

Ambassador Amber tours South Africa

A SEA Cadet from **Woking** unit was given a rare chance to represent the Corps during a visit to South Africa last year.

Amber Jodko, then a 17-year-old Leading Cadet, spent two weeks in the country on the Cadet of the Year exchange. Here is her account of the trip:

"Throughout my two fabulous weeks I visited Cape Town, Knysna, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and Durban, staying with different members of the South African Sea Cadet Corps in each city.

While in Cape Town I had the honour of visiting the likes of Table Mountain and the Cadet base **TS Woltemade**.

Here I had a superb time joining in with some of the cadet activities ranging from drill to

PT, allowing me to meet many of the cadets and understanding what opportunities are available to them in the South African Corps.

During my visit to Cape Town the SOSC Captain Blake took me to visit the naval base at Simon's Town.

To be able to visit a working naval base and see a little of what occurs behind the scene was a fantastic experience for me.

Here I was, able to gain more of an insight as to how the Navy operates while also being able to drive a tug boat after I had watched it manoeuvre a submarine out of the dock.

This was definitely one of the highlights of my visit and one that I will not forget.

I was also lucky enough to visit Knysna, where I was able to ride

an ostrich – this was definitely another highlight of my visit.

To begin with I was exceptionally nervous as it was so unlike any other previous experiences I had had in the United Kingdom.

I was also able to feed two of the ostriches and visit the vast **Cango Caves** and **Lion and Cheetah Park**, where I had my first ever encounter with some tiger cubs.

Also in Knysna I was able to meet one of the Knysna cadets, who showed me around the base and explained what experiences he had had since he joined the South African Cadets.

As my visit to South Africa progressed I visited Port Elizabeth where I was again able to attend a parade night.

Here I was able to give talks

to the various Cadets about the Sea Cadet Corps in the United Kingdom and describe some of my experiences to them.

While also in Port Elizabeth I was able to visit the **Addo Elephant Park** with two of the Leading Seamen from the Port Elizabeth Base.

It was a fantastic day as I was able to see the one animal I truly wanted to see, the elephant.

I was astounded at their grace when we came across a whole family of them by a water hole.

In Johannesburg I had a marvellous time.

Not only was I able to speak with the Johannesburg cadets while they were working on a community project, but I was also able to visit the **Lion Park** where I could stroke both lion cubs and a giraffe. It was amazing.

I was also lucky enough to be in Johannesburg on the day of **Nelson Mandela's** birthday and, as a result, we chose to visit the **Apartheid Museum**.

For me the museum had a lot of impact and really brought to life what it was like to live under the apartheid laws.

In Durban I was able to gain a greater insight into how a harbour operates when I visited the harbour control tower.

It was great to be able to see all of Durban from above and the view was fantastic.

The finale of my visit was to be as memorable as all my previous encounters as I visited the penguins at **Boulders Beach**, which were adorable.

Furthermore I was able to visit the grave of **Just Nuisance**, the Great Dane which captured the hearts of those in Cape Town as he was officially enrolled in the Royal Navy many years ago.

I will never forget any of the wonderful experiences I had on the exchange to South Africa, or the hospitality and kindness displayed by all those who I met and stayed with.

I would like to thank all those who made the exchange possible both for myself and those who have and will participate in it in the future."



Chips of distinction

THE Junior Sea Cadets of **Whitehaven** unit have decided that **George's** in Market Place has the best chips in town.

The young cadets, who are all between 10 and 12 years old, recently visited all the town's chip shops and take-aways and bought a portion of chips from each one that was open.

Then, in a blind tasting back at the cadet unit, they decided which they thought was the best.

Acting PO (SCC) **Kerslie Williams**, in charge of the Junior cadet section, said that although it was all a bit of fun there was a serious side to it.

"We try to ensure our Juniors have a good mix of both serious training and fun activities, with the emphasis on fun.

"In this case, each batch of chips was marked on things like colour, taste and size as well as how long they had to wait to be served.

"Although it was fun, it also introduced our cadets to the ideas behind research and marketing."

After careful – and tasty – consideration, the cadets eventually decided that **George's** chips (pictured above) were best, and later went back to present the shop with a certificate to proclaim that fact.

Demetri, Tracey and Christie, who work at **George's**, thanked the cadets and told them how surprised and pleased they were to be picked.

"It was really kind of them to choose us, and we will make sure that the certificate is on display in the shop," said **Tracey**.

Fine day for a parade in Kent



SITTINGBOURNE unit had the honour of hosting the annual **West Kent District Trafalgar Parade**.

More than 150 Sea Cadets and adult volunteers from nine units across West Kent, joined by units from the Army Cadet Force and Air Training Corps, came together to commemorate the most influential battle of its age which gave Britain mastery of the oceans.

The parade also remembers those who lost their lives, in particular **Nelson**, who built an almost legendary reputation for being a brilliant and lucky tactician as well as a fair and loyal commander.

The parade (left) was led by the Combined Band of West Kent Sea Cadets including national competition winners **Tunbridge Wells**.

Guest of honour and taking the salute was Deputy Lieutenant of Kent **Col Peter Bishop (Retd)**, while the Mayor of Swale, **Cllr Ben Stokes**, Mayoress **Cllr Sylvia Bennett**, **Gordon Henderson MP**, Sea Cadets

Southern Area Chairman **Ivor Riddell** and District Officer West Kent Lt Cdr (SCC) **Peter Jones RNR** also attended.

The day started with an inspection of all the divisions before the parade marched down **Sittingbourne High Street** to **St Michael's Church**.

Following the Church Service the parade re-mustered and returned via the High Street to the car park, presenting a formal salute to the Guest of Honour *en route*.

After the parade was dismissed the VIPs attended a reception at the unit's **TS Wyvern** headquarters along with senior Sea Cadet staff and members of ex-Service organisations such as the Royal Naval Association and Royal British Legion.

In the words of one Sea Cadet, who was in the lead division: "Wow – that was amazing!"

"I don't like doing drill that much, but I am really chuffed because my Mum and Dad were so proud of me, and it was just great to be a part of it."



Action heroes of Shiplake

CADETS from **Shiplake College Combined Cadet Force** visited **HMS Collingwood** for their autumn field day, as well as gaining an insight into Royal Navy training and careers.

Visiting the **Fareham** establishment's **Weapon Engineering Training Unit (WETU)**, the cadets watched demonstrations of the 4.5in Mk 8 gun and a small-calibre weapon system – typical examples of a Royal Navy ship's weaponry.

Next on the agenda was a chance to get into the swing of things on the **Low Ropes Course** and obstacle course (above), which helped develop the youngsters' communications and leadership skills.

S/Lt (SCC) **Charly Lowndes RNR**, of the **Shiplake CCF RN** section, said: "We always look forward to visiting **HMS Collingwood**.

"The 2011 Autumn Field Day introduced us to a new challenge, on the low ropes – being given the same demands on teamwork, planning and communication as the regular Royal Navy is a great privilege.

"The cadets who were blindfolded discovered a whole new level of trust in their shipmates.

"Our day included a heady mixture of mental and physical tasks, plus the chance to see and chat to instructors and students on the wide range of courses at **Collingwood**.

"We know how busy the Royal Navy is these days, and being made so welcome gives a real sense of purpose to the section."

Donations for Poole

POOLE unit has received a £9,000 donation from **Chris Bulteel**, the former Mayor of the borough – proceeds of the Mayor of Poole's Charity 2010-11.

The cheque was presented to unit chairman **Jackie Maynard** and Commanding Officer Lt

(SCC) **Colin Webb RNR** during the Annual General Meeting and prize-giving evening.

Other donations which were handed over on the evening included 20 tracksuits from **Poole Quay Boat Haven** and a cash contribution from the **High Sheriff of Dorset, Alan Frost**, which paid for bugle mouthpieces, glockenspiel beaters and the refurbishment of two of the band's glockenspiels.



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Volunteer, donate or even leave a legacy

Visit sea-cadets.org or call 020 7654 7000

SEA CADETS

Helping with the overheads

TELFORD unit has been having a few problems with overheads recently – the roof isn't as effective as it should be, and water ingress has damaged classrooms and the heads.

It is not a new problem – the unit has applied for a number of grants over the past few years without success, and a survey has shown a completely new roof is needed, as it is beyond repair.

So in addition to normal running costs, the unit is trying to find a considerable amount of cash for this extra bill.

As with several other units around the country, Telford has joined the 'Just Text Giving' initiative from Vodafone to simplify the donation process.

Anyone wishing to support TS Wrekin should text the word WREK40 then an amount of money, and send it to 70070.

So to give the unit £10, the text would be WREK £10.

Offshore success

THROUGHOUT 2010 the instructors of Rickmansworth and Watford unit gained sea time and RYA qualifications to be able to take their cadets on offshore yacht charters.

As a result, during the 2011 boating season cadets from TS Renown have been frequent visitors to the East Coast, generally sailing out of Titchmarsh Marina, to other marinas further north, including the popular Shotley Marina and Ipswich Marina.

The unit has had a couple of cadets venture offshore before but only on the square-rigged flagship TS Royalist – never (as far as they know) on ocean-going yachts.

So with 18 having now had that experience – with some gaining RYA offshore qualifications including Competent Crew status – counts as a successful year by anyone's standards.

Donations in memory of murdered officer

SEA Cadets in Wigan have been presented with three cheques donated by Mrs Gillian Molyneux in memory of her husband.

Lt Cdr Ian Molyneux was HMS Astute's weapon engineer officer, and was shot dead by a sailor on board the submarine during a port visit to Southampton in April last year.

AB Ryan Donovan is serving life for the shooting, having admitted murder and three charges of attempted murder during a trial in September.

Lt Cdr Molyneux had close ties with the unit, where two of his children attend.

The unit received £1,914.06 – Mrs Molyneux is making donations to her late husband's favourite charities in his memory.

As well as presenting the cheques, Mrs Molyneux was

Double celebration at Loughborough

LOUGHBOROUGH celebrated a double Long Service Medal ceremony when the prestigious awards were presented to PO (SCC) Karen Derbyshire and Lt (SCC) Kay Adey RNR.

The Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire, Maj Geoffrey Simpson, supported by District Officer Lt Cdr Paul Parry RNR, praised both women for their dedicated service as he presented them with their medals, which mark 12 years voluntary service to the Cadet Forces.

Maj Simpson noted that PO Derbyshire (left of picture), formerly of Leicester unit and now in charge of the Loughborough juniors, had revitalised the section with her innovative ideas,

ensuring that the ten to 12-year-olds enjoyed learning and gaining qualifications.

The juniors showed their appreciation by presenting PO Derbyshire with a bouquet of flowers.

Maj Simpson then went on to note Lt Adey's qualifications and how, as CO of Loughborough, she leads by example, ensuring that cadets and staff alike gain qualifications in the huge range of topics covered by the Sea Cadets.

PO Derbyshire said the support she got from Lt Adey (right of picture) was "wonderful", while the officer added that when she joined with her son, she had no idea how much Sea Cadets would become a part of her life.



Leicester launches anniversary appeal

including first aid, Duke of Edinburgh Awards and BTECs in public service, mechanical and electrical engineering.

For many this offers life-changing learning experiences, and apart from offering the chance to learn new and valuable skills, it offers an insight into and understanding of citizenship and community values which are a great asset in work or education.

As with all Sea Cadet units, all operating costs are met from fundraising and donations.

In the case of Leicester, it takes

£12,500 a year to keep the good (training) ship Tiger on course.

Now, at the start of the anniversary year, the unit is aiming to double its effort, raising a further £12,500 through the year to replace its motor training boat and associated safety equipment, allowing Tiger to continue training and educating the young people of Leicester.

The training boat is primarily used to bring cadets up to Royal Yachting Association standard and as a safety boat for all the unit's water-borne activities throughout

the year.

It also acts as a river safety boat at the Leicester Waterside Festival and other water-based civic events.

The unit takes part in a large number of civic ceremonies and events in Leicester, from the Lord Mayor's inauguration to marshalling participants in the city's Walk of Life, as well as providing volunteers for other charity events in the area.

For more details, or offers of help, email the unit at tstigerleic@gmail.com

LEICESTER unit celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, and is looking to mark the occasion in style.

The unit's main aim is to provide opportunities for young people to develop into responsible, dependable members of society, by allowing youngsters between the ages of ten and 18 to gain valuable life skills such as teamwork and leadership through education and adventurous nautical and land-based activities.

While some cadets go on to take up careers in the maritime industry, the primary goal of the Sea Cadet Corps is to create an environment in which youngsters can flourish.

Training courses are designed to stretch and develop cadets, leading to useful additional Corps and external qualifications,



● A GROUP of Sea Cadets from Farnham unit visited HMS Collingwood to brush up on communications skills. On arrival the cadets were met by Lt Cdr Legg, the curator of the museum at the Fareham training establishment. After a tour of the museum (above), the visitors saw the Communications Section, where they were given a detailed briefing on Morse code, and had the opportunity to carry out a practical training session

A bright future in sails

FOUR Sea Cadets braved a spell of harsh North Sea weather to earn their Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Day Skipper tickets.

Tom Pocock and Chris Hughes, from Southend unit, and Tom Gibbons and Marcus Bishop, from Wallasey unit, undertook the six-day course at the newest National Training Centre, TS Rebel.

The course provided the cadets with the opportunity to put into practice their navigation and pilotage skills, previously learnt in the classroom, as well as enabling them to experience the added responsibility and demands that go with taking command of a yacht at sea.

The Principal of TS Rebel, Nick Moulton, said: "This was a tough week in testing weather conditions for the cadets, and they responded to the challenge with enthusiasm, fortitude and competence."

TS Rebel Chairman Chris Edmunds said: "We are delighted to be able to provide the opportunity for senior cadets to gain their first 'command' qualification."

TS Rebel, a coastal station in Essex, provides more than 350 course places annually in offshore, power boat, keel boat and yacht racing training for youngsters.

As well as practical training it also offers shore-based courses in navigation, sea survival and VHF radio.

Sunbury looking for new leader

THE thriving Sunbury and Walton-on-Thames unit is looking for an enthusiastic new CO and additional instructional staff.

The command role includes overseeing training and administration, ensuring proper discipline and safety of cadets, to oversee the ship's routines and the effective running of the unit.

It is an outward-facing role with the Corps needing to maintain and enhance its position in the community.

TS Black Swan first paraded in 1943 and today boasts a strong ship's company and junior section.

Situated on the River Thames near Walton Bridge, the 2011 season saw this successful boating unit represent London at the National Combined Regatta, gaining silver, and with its strong drill ethos cadets competed in the Armed Guard category at the National Drill Championships.

The unit has an assortment of boats, including two new Trinity 500s and three ASCs for rowing, a Viking, Dory and Champ for power boating and various other craft including sailboards and canoes.

This is a great opportunity for the right person with vision and Sea Cadet or Naval experience to lead staff and cadets forward.

Potential candidates for the command role, or any other volunteer role within the unit, should contact unit chairman Gail Cramp on 01932 889244 or email gail.cramp@btinternet.com

Wedding (battle) dress



MORNING suit. Dress. Cake. Rings. Napoleonic guard...

That last one is a bit of a red herring, but an essential element of the nuptials when Mark Presland married his fiancée Helen at the Reid Rooms in Margaret Roding, Essex.

The theme of the wedding was the Battle Proms – an event the couple attend each year at Hatfield House, featuring classical music, fireworks, cannonfire and lots of flag-waving.

Mark knows the CO of Hertford and Ware unit, CPO (SCC) Paul Buffham, who agreed to attend the wedding along with a group of cadets dressed in Napoleonic battledress (left) – and Mark said they deserve a mention as they "looked amazing and were an absolute credit to themselves."



Captain calls in

THE Captain of Sea Cadets, Capt Mark Windsor, paid a visit to the Stewartry unit in Kircudbright.

With nearly 400 units within his 'manor' Capt Windsor cannot visit them all, so the youngsters (and staff) at TS John Paul Jones felt honoured that he had called in on them.

Capt Windsor was shown around the training ship by Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Tom Plummer RNR, meeting unit instructors who demonstrated some of the courses on offer.

The evening finished with the presentation of a pennant to the unit in recognition of their achievements this year (pictured left – Capt Windsor is centre of front row, Lt Plummer on the left).

The presentation of a pennant indicates that the unit has shown a good standard of performance and efficiency throughout the year.



A diary of tragedies

A COUPLE of months ago we praised a book about the deeds of a small group of commandos who ranged behind enemy lines seizing crucial intelligence in WW2.

Among their finds was the entire records of the German Navy – records which continue to provide rich pickings for historians seven decades later.

Daniel Morgan and Bruce Taylor have spent ten years poring over those records, mostly held on microfilm by the Naval Historical Branch in Portsmouth.

Together with other sources in German and official and unofficial British, Canadian and American records and accounts, the two authors have produced the monumental **U-Boat Attack Logs: A Complete Record of Warship Sinkings from Original Sources** (Seaforth, £45 ISBN 978-1848-3211-82).

It details the destruction of 109 vessels – mostly British, but also American, French, Canadian, Norwegian, Australian and Soviet *inter alia* – at the hands of German submarines.

Those sinkings are decried in first-hand accounts from friend and foe and the logs of the U-boats. The authors detail losses famous, such as *Courageous*, *Ark Royal*, *Barham*, *Royal Oak*, *USS Reuben James*, and others largely lost to history.

HMS *Matabele* was sunk by U454 while shepherding a Russian convoy in January 1942; all but two of her 238 crew perished in the bitter Barents Sea (if the cold didn't kill them, depth charges dropped by HMS *Somali* and *Harrier* to destroy the offending submarine did).

The last of the lost warships to feature in this excellent volume, HMS *Bullen*, had her back broken off Cape Wrath in December 1944. A little over half her ship's company survived, but not her captain who demanded all his men were rescued before he was plucked from the ocean.

The U-boat logs of the attacks are reproduced in *extenso* here in translation. Generally, they're rather prosaic – as war diaries tend to be.

But occasionally, U-boat commanders made more flowery entries.

After sinking carrier *Courageous* – and having evaded all attempts to sink his boat, U29 – Otto Schuhart surfaced at night to inspect the damage. There was little of the latter, but the water was so phosphorescent that the waterline around the submarine made it seem she was “lit up by glowing bulbs” which allowed the crew to see great shoals of fish gathered around them.

And Günther Prien's log of his attack on the *Royal Oak* in Scapa Flow is a breathless affair describing “explosions, crashes and rumblings”, columns of water and fire shooting up, and, finally, fragments of the ship flying through the air.

Prien continued: “Then the bay bursts into life, lights come on in the destroyers and morse signals start frantically tapping from all quarters.” He lamented that his torpedo tubes were empty – and that “the devil himself has taken three of our eels”; three eels (torpedoes) had failed to explode...

Overall, this is an indispensable reference work for anyone studying either the U-boat campaign or WW2 at sea. It is clear, insightful, never judgmental, copiously illustrated, fascinating – and harrowing, for the fate of the men in the ships the submarines attacked was invariably grim.

In short, no future book on the Battle of the Atlantic should be written without referring to Morgan and Taylor's work.

How the struggle for the Med was won

The Grove Review

BACK in 2002 Chatham Publishing brought out in Britain the important study **The Naval War in the Mediterranean 1940-1943** which covered this key maritime conflict from Italy's declaration of war to its surrender.

The book had originally been published in the United States in 1999 and had already been reprinted there.

Its great merit was that it was co-authored by an American, Jack Greene, and an Italian, Alessandro Massignani, which meant that the often-ignored Italian perspective was given fair and balanced coverage, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

Last year a new edition appeared co-published by Frontline Books (an imprint of the prolific Pen and Sword of Barnsley) and the Naval Institute Press of Annapolis Maryland USA (respective ISBNs 978-1-84832-618-7 and 978-1-59114-561-5).

The new book is no mere reprint. In their introduction the authors point out that “they have made a modest number of corrections, mostly of detail but some of substance”. Quite a large number of pages have clearly been re-set, although the copious end notes and then comprehensive bibliography appear unchanged from the earlier edition.

We have to be content with the listing of new sources in the introduction. This is rather a pity, but probably inevitable given the need to control production costs.

The authors, who have between them published a large number of works on both naval and military topics, have tried very hard to produce a fair account and they generally succeed.

Nevertheless, a British reader may think that London's perspective sometimes gets lost mid-Atlantic. At various times, e.g. in the section on pre-war British planning against Italy and in the

British contribution to the Allied landings in 1942-3 there is rather more to be said.

One sympathises with the difficulties of foreigners researching at Kew but attention to the Court Martial into the scuttling of HMS *Manchester* would have prevented the errors in the description of this unfortunate event in the saga of the *Pedestal* convoy. Some criticisms of Cunningham are also a little simplistic.

Nevertheless it is in its Italian perspectives that the book scores most highly. Reading it demonstrates the huge handicaps with which the Italian Royal Navy struggled.

These ranged from chronic shortages of fuel to inadequate gunnery. Co-operation with both the Italian Air Force and the German Luftwaffe was very poor, a fundamental problem given the importance of aviation in the Mediterranean campaign.

The disastrous defeat off Matapan in which the Italian Navy lost 2,303 dead and 1,411 prisoners deterred the Italians from further night action, for which the British Royal Navy had the equipment and training but not the Italians.

Restrictive orders from above, reflecting a ‘fleet in being’ mentality, often prevented greater Italian efforts.

Relations with the Germans were always uneasy and, although some Italians continued to fight alongside the Germans at the armistice, many were only too

happy to join the Allies, while others were in favour of scuttling their ships.

The cross-cutting loyalties of the Italian Navy might have been more fully covered at the end of the book, which tails off a little scappily after its comprehensive coverage of earlier events. An additional chapter or two on events in the theatre after Italy changed sides would also have added to the book's value but a 340 page book is perhaps long enough.

The authors rightly put emphasis on the exploits of the less-conventional capabilities of the Italian Navy. The success of the *Maiale* human torpedoes in changing the balance of naval power in the Eastern Mediterranean at the end of 1941 when they sent Queen Elizabeth and *Valiant* to the bottom of Alexandria harbour was especially noteworthy.

They did not always succeed, however, and it is hard to agree with the authors that the Italians should have concentrated on such forces in a kind of *jeune école* naval policy. They point to the success of the Italian battleships in safeguarding supplies to North Africa in 1941-2.

The authors clearly think that the Axis made an error in not making an amphibious attack on Malta. In this they self-consciously take issue with other studies, including the Italian official history and MacGregor Knox's *Hitler's Italian Allies* published in 2000. These works stress problems the Axis had in planning and executing joint and combined operations.

Moreover I am far from sure that Malta was quite such the sitting duck in August 1942 as Greene and Massignani argue; an

attack on Malta would probably have been a humiliating and unnecessary disaster.

Keeping Malta in British hands was indeed a wonderful way of inflicting maritime attrition on the Allies as huge resources were invested in preventing the loss of another Imperial ‘fortress’ and the probable resulting fall of the Churchill government.

The co-authors are right to characterise the Harpoon convoy in June 1942 as an Italian victory when an Italian cruiser and destroyer force supported by aircraft got the better of the surface escort and only two freighters reached Malta.

Crucially, the Italian surface forces prevented the damaged American tanker *Kentucky* from reaching Malta to sustain the island's fuel requirements. No wonder the subsequent *Pedestal* convoy was given the escort it was.

On this occasion the Axis scored great successes again but the vital tanker, *Ohio* this time, got through making it a clear Pyrrhic victory for the British rather than the ‘defeat’ the authors at one point claim.

Greene and Massignani are firm advocates of the importance of Malta in interdicting Axis supplies to North Africa, although they do not cite Dr Douglas Austin's important work on this subject which would have further supported their thesis.

I remain unconvinced, however, especially as the co-authors admit that with Rommel in Egypt in 1942 the problem was much more getting supplies to the front rather than to African ports.

The authors modestly admit that they are more concerned with creating a basis for debate than offering clear conclusions.

They have certainly succeeded in this aim and the new book is absolutely essential reading for anyone interested in the naval history of World War 2. Even those who possess the older edition should read the new one and at a very reasonable £16.99 there is no excuse for not doing so.



First-hand footage from the front line

IF *U-Boat Attack Logs* has whetted your appetite for German submarine operations, there's some fascinating footage to be found in **Warships Attack Convoys** (Pen and Sword, £14.99).

For despite the title, the 55-minute DVD features U-boat operations – as well as merchant raiders – in the bitter struggle against Britain's supply lines.

In the first half of the war in particular, the German Navy sent dedicated *Propaganda Kompanie* journalists and cameramen to sea to record the actions (they included the future author of the famous submarine novel *Das Boot*, Lothar-Günther Buchheim).

Their words and images filled the Third Reich propaganda sheets such as *Signal* and *Die Kriegsmarine* (the official magazine of the German Fleet – a cross between a Nazified version of *Navy News* and *Picture Post*) as well as the weekly newsreel, the *Wochenschau*.

The PK-men were invariably on the very front line – and paid a high price accordingly. But they also brought back some particularly vivid images and footage.

Five-minute newsreel items – with the harsh, steely commentary translated into English – form much of this DVD.

There's some excellent footage of an attack by the ‘Stukas of the sea’ E-boats (*Schnellboote* – fast boats – in their native tongue), destroyers struggling through some very rough seas (proof that, however odious the flag they fought for, German sailors were as much victims of the elements as their British counterparts), and U99 on patrol in the autumn of 1940.

The latter was commanded by U-boat ace Otto Kretschmer who was only the second man to be awarded the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves – a fact recorded in the newsreel excerpt here.

And, if you take away the bombastic music and propaganda tunes which often threaten to drown out the narrator, the production values of these items for the weekly newsreel aren't too far removed from what you'll see on today's news bulletins.

The second half of the DVD is a 25-minute contemporary film featuring some particularly rare footage of the actions of an auxiliary cruiser – armed merchant raider – which struck at Allied shipping using a civilian disguise to lull vessels into a false sense of security.

A celebration – and indictment

MENTION the name John Nott in Naval circles and 30 years after his infamous *White Paper 'The Way Forward'*, people will still roll their eyes.

In the aviation world, the name Duncan Sandys (pronounced ‘sands’) provokes a similar reaction. His 1957 *White Paper* did for aircraft what Nott intended to do to the Fleet a generation later – wield a bloody great axe through it.

Sandys demanded that the myriad of smaller British aircraft manufacturers – fabled names such as Supermarine, de Havilland, Avro, Fairey – join forces, merging to form larger companies such as BAC (forerunner of British Aerospace) and Hawker Siddeley.

He also believed missiles, not jets were the future and cancelled a string of projects, among them a Mach 3 jet for the RAF (the Avro 730) to replace the V-bombers and a Mach 2 jet/rocket fighter for the Fleet Air Arm (the SR177). Sandys only spared the English Electric Lightning because the project was too far advanced; it went on to become Britain's greatest fighter of the Cold War age.

The minister – Churchill's son-in-law and reputedly the lover of the Duchess of Argyll in a scandalous divorce case – also got rid of the RNVR air branch (although, on the plus side he

did the Fleet Air Arm a favour by cancelling the Short Seamew, a cheap, unwieldy and ugly anti-submarine plane described unlovingly as “a camel amongst race horses”).

The special, beautifully-illustrated edition of James Hamilton-Paterson's **Empire of the Clouds** (Faber and Faber, £25 ISBN 978-0-571-27889-3) is a wonderful homage to what was – and a tantalising glimpse of what might have been.

For while many of the RN's cancelled post-war projects never got beyond the sketch and design stage, or perhaps a few models, prototypes and demonstration models of cancelled aircraft abound in the 50s and 60s.

In the first 15 or so years after WW2, Britain's aviation industry produced aircraft which still evoke powerful memories more than half a century later.

This is an era when the Comet was born. The Harrier. The Buccaneer. The Sea Vixen. The Lightning. An era when barely had an aircraft entered service (for example the Supermarine Attacker, 1951) than it was withdrawn (the Fleet Air Arm scrapped its Attackers in 1954), surpassed by technological

advances.

By the time the Harrier, “the last great aircraft Britain produced unaided” was entering service at the end of the 1960s, the days of an independent UK aircraft industry were all but over: international collaboration was the order of the day – Concorde, the Jaguar, Puma and Lynx helicopters and, in time, the Tornado and Typhoon.

Empire of the Clouds is a pretty scathing indictment of successive governments who dithered, made some very bad decisions and spent millions on projects which never saw the light of day – it's not a new phenomenon.

More than £20m was written off in the mid-60s (around £300m today) when a supersonic version of the Harrier was canned. That project, the P1154, was far from unique...

Indeed, the author says the post-war aero industry was dogged by “managerial, military and political incompetence that would have disgraced a banana republic.”

Luckily, it was blessed with brilliant engineers and fearless pilots (in the early 50s the latter earned around £40 per week – around £900 today – twice as much as equivalent Fleet Air Arm

fliers of the day).

So as well as being an indictment and lament, Hamilton-Paterson's book is also a celebration of great designs – and great designers – and brave men.

Test pilots paid a fearful price for pushing the boundaries: in one eight-month period spanning 1956 and 1957, there were 34 accidents and 42 test aircrew killed – one death every six days.

At Farnborough air show in 1952 – an age when *only* British aircraft were on display – the de Havilland company was demonstrating its DH110, a strange-looking swept wing jet with a distinctive twin boom.

The aircraft broke apart in mid-air, its debris smashing into the crowd. More than two dozen people, including the jet's two crew, were killed.

Barely had the wreckage been swept away and the bodies recovered than the air show went on. In time, the DH110 would be redesigned. It would go on to become a Fleet Air Arm legend, the Sea Vixen, serving throughout the 60s and into the early 70s.

None of the families of the victims sued the airshow organisers or de Havilland. An age when British aircraft kept pace with the USA and USSR, it would, writes the author, “have seemed downright unpatriotic” to do so.

In the intervening six decades one feels at times it's not just an aircraft industry that we've lost.



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Marines triumph in Lympstone pool

ONCE again, the Royal Marines are Navy swimming champions.

The annual championships were held on December 1 at CTCRM Lympstone, courtesy of the splendid support of the Commanding Officer Lt Col Neil Willson.

Holding the event at Topsham certainly enabled some of the youthful recruits and more junior members of the Corps to be spared for an hour or two from the rigours of Woodbury Common or worse in order to do their stuff in the pool and impress the assembled RN coaches and selectors, doubling on this occasion as officials and team leaders, *writes Lt Cdr Alan Walker.*

More than 70 personnel were involved in the event in which, had it been held at a more traditional venue in Portsmouth, the 23 points won by recruits Cater and Winterbeck would have gone elsewhere – as might some of their relay contributions.

Certainly the small numbers in the East team suffered from having available only one entry (max two) in seven of their ten men's events.

The East team however took six first places to the marines' four, but the Royals with two swimmers in most events, finished on 101 points – 40 clear of East, who in turn were 15 clear of West.

The West rarely had fewer than

two swimmers in events but it being a Thursday, a team based in Plymouth might expect to lose a few stars to activities more towards the 'pointed end of the business'.

Another notable RM contribution but across the board, was that of the diminutive, experienced female RN swimmer, the remarkable Msn Caitlin O'Malley, who not only complemented WO Walker's West Men's team, she also 'ran' the West Women's team and swam maximum points for them, she was also seen laying down the law to ten strapping marines, sorting out their affiliations for future swimming and water polo events within and outside the Corps.

If ever the RM wanted to field an RM women's swimming – and water polo – team from female members of the Band Service and women serving with RM Units, Caitlin would be the driving force behind its certain production.

To cap all that she also swam for the Corps Select team versus the RN Select in a water polo match which opened the day's proceedings in the pool.

This was a feisty event where the dolphin-like O'Malley more than played her part, the 10-7 final score gave spectators a feast of goals – so much so that it did not really matter who won.

The Navy women's swimming



squad has some real characters within its ranks – it reads like the list of finalists at the RN Sportswoman of the year awards: AB(SE) Ellie Wallis, as well as swimming for the East in this competition, is close to completing a three-year nursing degree course in a branch transfer to the Queen Alexandra's Naval Nursing Service.

In addition, completely off her own bat, she has taken on a massive personal commitment running in the memorial mile challenge – running a mile in memory of every Service person who has lost their life in Afghanistan.

From her home in Birmingham, she travels here, there and

everywhere to rack up the miles at organised runs and meetings, all in her own time. She has recently run in London and the Teign Valley 'Toddle'; so far she has covered around 200 miles or so – each mile for a specifically named individual as listed on her Facebook page.

Navy women's swimming team captain and former RNASA Sportswoman of the Year nominee LH Gemma Nash was competing in probably her last RN Championships having decided to leave the Service after the birth last year of daughter Juno.

Mindful of the huge loss her departure will bring, there were those who pressed her to stay

Performances good, results less so

RN Ladies Vs Weymouth

The RN Ladies hosted Weymouth at HMS Heron. After some disappointing results so far this season, the Navy were determined to record their first victory. Weymouth started the game brightly and had a dangerous free kick in the first minute which luckily went wide.

Weymouth continued to press and in the fifth minute the ball was given away in midfield and the subsequent shot found its way through the RN keeper's legs and into the back of the net; this was the wake-up call that the Navy needed.

The game started to settle down giving the RN the opportunity to gain some possession. This paid off on the 15th minute when the RN won their first corner. A great delivery from AB(Sea) Jenny Dick saw POPT Sam Covey head the ball into the back of the net. The equaliser! Or so we thought. The linesman, with his superhuman vision flagged for handball and so the goal was disallowed!

From this point Weymouth were winning every ball in midfield, creating lots of opportunities. However, the RN defence stood strong and kept the score at 1-0.

In the 31st minute, an excellent challenge was made on the edge of the RN penalty area to stop the advancing Weymouth team, however, the referee saw it differently and blew for a foul. The resulting free kick found the back of the net.

Change was clearly needed and so LMA Lynsay 'Dougal' Phillips was swapped from the left to the right of midfield to try to bring her into the game more and utilise her pace. However, Weymouth were still threatening and the RN keeper LStd Angie Comrie was being kept busy.

In the 39th minute, POPT Sam Covey was upended and awarded a free kick. A great delivery into the danger area by RPO Mitch Garrett could only find the Weymouth keeper.

Both teams had further chances towards the end of the first half but it was Weymouth who found the net again in the 43rd minute.

An injury to the RN keeper just before the break saw CPOPT Mickey Breed run onto the pitch with his physio hat on, but his magic sponge did not work and LReg Kelly Riddell was replaced by LStd Comrie in goal.

The RN were understandably disappointed at half time and so further changes were made. CH



Inside with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

Helen Kingscott moved into the centre of midfield swapping with LMA Mitch Armer who moved to right back and CPOAEM Mariesa Dryhurst replaced Covey at centre forward.

From the kick off, the Navy began to dominate the midfield more with LPT Nat Bavister and Kingscott linking up well.

The RN had fire in their bellies now and challenges were flying in thick and fast, unfortunately resulting in some free kicks being conceded in the process and the physios being called into action.

The Navy were creating opportunities from midfield with both Bavister and Kingscott having shots that failed to find the net. The closest the RN came to a goal was a glancing header from Dryhurst that went just wide of the post.

The last changes were made to the RN team to give both AET Hannah Canning and AB Megan Mayer a chance to impress. With the game drawing to a close Weymouth scored the final goal of the match which was disappointing after the improvement shown by the RN in the second half. Overall a disappointing result for the Navy, against a team that they had beaten over the past few seasons.

RN Ladies Vs West Midlands Police
Following their disappointing defeat to Weymouth, the ladies travelled to West Midlands Police. With only 11 players available, manager, POPT Lisa Farthing dusted off her boots and came out of retirement to play.

The Police started brightly and it soon became apparent that they had a lot of pace up front. After only five minutes, they made a break down the left-hand-side, and, cutting inside flashed a shot past the keeper to go 1-0 up.

The Navy worked hard from the subsequent kick-off but trying to play the police offside failed and a second police goal was scored in the seventh minute.

After a brief period of RN dominance, a move broke down and a long kick from the police keeper found their centre forward who calmly put the ball in the back of the net for the third goal – all within 15 minutes.

The game was starting to open

up. Both teams had chances and some fine saves were made by the RN keeper and the defence on the goal line. The Navy pressed forward at every opportunity and won a couple of corners in the process but failed to take advantage of these opportunities. A copy of the third goal saw the police opt for a long ball and a fourth strike.

Still the RN had their fair share of possession but couldn't find the final killer ball. Captain LPT Nat Bavister made a run through the midfield but her shot could only find the keeper. In the final minute of the first half, the police put a good passing move together and scored a fifth.

The half-time score was tough to take as they ladies had played well for long spells. Everyone was raring to go for the second period, determined not to concede.

Within the first couples of minutes the RN had a great chance to score. A beautiful passing move started from the back but AB(WS) Kirsty Capill's shot was saved by the keeper.

The sailors were starting to dominate the midfield allowing Surg Lt Steph Ingram to unleash a shot from 20 yards but unfortunately the police keeper was again well-positioned.

In the 55th minute a free kick was awarded to the police on the edge of the area. The RN keeper pulled off a great save to deny a further goal.

The RN continued to put some great passages of play together; however, they could not make it count and in the 70th minute, the police picked up a loose ball on the left hand side and floated a ball over the keeper into the back of the net for their sixth goal.

A change was made with the only substitute, Lt Jen Parker RAN, coming on for Capill up front. The RN did not let their heads go down and continued to press forward desperately in search of a goal. It just wasn't meant to be and the scored stayed at 6-0 to West Midlands Police.

This was a particularly tough result as the ladies had played well for long periods during the match. They created chances but that final killer ball was missing. A lot of positives can be taken from the match and it has also highlighted

the areas that need working on for the next match ahead of the Inter-Services.

RN U23 Vs London University

The U23's travelled to Walthamstow for an afternoon kick off-against London University. The conditions were ideal and a well-kept playing surface made for a good game.

The RN found themselves under pressure in the opening exchanges with some flowing football from London causing problems.

The students opted to play with one of their forward players in the hole between their front line and midfield effectively overloading the middle of the park. A well-executed goal was no more than London deserved early in the game.

The RN team grew in confidence throughout the first half and after a couple of changes at the interval and an understanding of how to combat the London tactics, the RN team began to dominate the game.

Solid midfield performances from ET Sam Scott (Collingwood), ET Jamie Jackson (Sultan) and AB Adam Beckett (Dragon) started to influence proceedings and Mnes Mike Scott (42 Cde) and Olly Kennedy (45 CDO) constantly tested the London back four.

The pressure finally paid off in the final quarter of the game and having struck the woodwork the RN grabbed an equaliser after a fine individual effort from Scott, who beat the well-drilled London offside trap to round the keeper and level the scores.

A good test for the U23s against a strong opposition, the team went away satisfied with the result and pleased with the cohesion that the new squad is developing.

RN U23 Vs England Schools FA U18

Next up for the U23s were England Schools FA U18 at Lilleshall National Sports Centre.

A morning kick-off on an excellent playing surface promised a good game of football in a game that is a regular feature in the U23 calendar; the ESFA use this game as an opportunity to select their final squad for the International Schools programme and the Inter-Service teams provide good opposition.

The Navy squad enjoyed the excellent facilities offered by the National Sports Centre at Lilleshall and began the

in the Service – even suggesting names of more Leander class ships after which she could name second and subsequent children. She has owned up to quite liking the name Danae, has passed no comment on Cleopatra and Galatea.

The RNASA is pretty well resigned to her imminent departure which will be before the 2012 Inter Services Swimming Competition. She will be sorely missed for her vibrant personality, not least too as the holder of five RN records, several Inter-Service records and at least 20 RN masters records.

The women's points totals were East 91, West 57 going into the Relays. With only two teams, the ladies were permitted to swim in up to three events; there were 21 points at stake in every six-person, six-lane event.

For the East, Nash led the way on 18, AB Sam Eagle and Wtr Cath Adams on 17 apiece, followed by Emma Kearse (15), Army nurse Cpl Edge (nine), AB Emma Lobban (nine) and AB Wallis (nine).

For the West ladies, the much-improved LPT Helen Walker (12) was second-highest scorer after O'Malley (16), Sarah Griffiths and Gemma Adams were next on 11 followed by Sarah Feltham (DQ+10) and Sarah Prophet (DNS+7).

AB Jeremy Osborn (MCM 1) opened his account with a clear win for the East in the 100m Butterfly.

The Inter-Service cap swam in the 2010 Commonwealth games for Guernsey and, career permitting, has his sights on Commonwealth Games 2014 in Glasgow. In this first event, his six points for winning the race were overtaken by second and third placed Marines Dan Rose (second and five points) and Dusty Miller (third and four points).

Both Rose and Mne Garry Rimbs had come *voluntarily* from post-op tour leave to take part. Edging Timbs into second place in the 200m backstroke was LPT Stu Mantle, the only East swimmer in the event.

Timms' five points, when added to Sgt Brian Kirk's three points, took the RM total two points further ahead. Points for minor places matter as evidenced by AB Morley's third (four points) and Cdr Etchell's fifth place (two points) for the West to match the singleton winners' points.

The Men, split into three teams, were allowed to swim in two individual events and a relay. For the RM, recruits Winterbeck (12) and Carter (11) top scored with Osborn and Mantle, both on 12 points, the pick of the East.

game brightly, taking control of proceedings in the first 20 minutes with some good pressure applied by AET Danny Brookwell (Culdrose) down the left, the troublesome pairing of Mnes Scott and Kennedy gave the ESFA plenty to think about.

The game turned in the 25 minute with a well-executed set piece by ESFA which led to a headed goal from a corner.

ESFA grew in confidence and having been allowed time on the ball, the midfield began to create opportunities and took a deserved two goal lead from a strike 25 yards from goal.

The U23s didn't allow their game plan to be broken and after a period of sustained pressure came back into the game with a goal from AET Brookwell.

The RN team were unable to see the half out and the ESFA team regained their two-goal cushion on the stroke of half-time to go in 3-1 up at the break.

Several changes took place for both teams at half time and the second half was evenly contested up to the 80th minute when a short ball back to the RN keeper was intercepted and the ESFA team centre forward slotted the ball away calmly to wrap up the game.

RN Vets Vs Havant/Waterlooville Vets

The RN Vets played host to an experienced and very talented Havant/Waterlooville Vets side at Victory Stadium.

After a very poor performance in their last game against Hampshire Police, the Vets were keen to get back to winning ways.

Early exchanges were fairly even, but the quality and experience amongst the visitors was pretty evident.

In the 15th minute great interplay from the Hawks' forwards led to a very harshly awarded penalty against the RN keeper Jason White.

However, from the spot kick, White pulled off a great save, diving to his right and turning the shot around the post for a corner.

Navy Vets continued to work hard to get into the game but were let down by some poor delivery into the final third of the pitch.

In the 38th minute another penalty was awarded to the visitors when Jamie Cook was adjudged to commit a foul on the edge of the box.

Again White made an outstanding save only to see the

rebound fall at the feet of the attacker to stab home the first goal.

Four changes were made at half time for the Navy. Off came Lindsay, Hawes, Maddox and Stephens for Horseman, Hodkinson, Brady, and Raybould.

Within five minutes of the restart great play between Hodkinson and Raybould saw the visitors' keeper make a fine save turning a shot from Hodkinson around the post for a corner.

From the corner a point blank powerful header from Wallace was somehow saved, only for the rebound to fall to Mark Raybould whose shot cannoned off the keeper for another corner.

The RN were now getting into the game and creating more chances. The pace and tempo of the match was quite breathtaking at times (especially for vets!).

Another fine save by White from a long-range effort kept the RN in with a chance.

However, in the 68th minute the Hawks scored their second goal.

What looked like a foul on Paul Willets, the Navy skipper, was waved on by the ref for the forward to place his shot beyond White in the RN goal.

In the closing stages, the Navy pressed hard for a consolation goal but found the visitors' well-organised defence hard to break down.

Despite a 2-0 defeat this was a much better performance from the RN, who were full of effort and commitment.

Vets goalkeeper, Jason White, won a well-deserved man-of-the-match accolade.

ERWL Five-a-Side

HMS Sultan ladies entered the five-a-side ERWL at the beginning of the winter term.

Guided by manager LPT Kezza Isbella the team of CPOs Dryhurst and Oldridge, POPT Parker and Covey, and LAET Siggins enjoyed a term of triumph after triumph (they won every encounter bar one).

The final standings saw Sultan on top of the league over Nelson and Collingwood.

Player of the term was PO Parker, with CPO Dryhurst taking the golden boot.

All teams in the league showed great commitment and hard work throughout and developed their teams.

Sultan ladies are now looking forward to defending their title.

Miles and miles, off road, on road

2011 was a very tough and demanding season for the **cyclists** in Navy blue due to unavailability and injuries, and although the successes of the past were not as visible there were still many highs, and the future looks very bright indeed.

The pre-season training camp to Majorca was superbly organised by CPO Mark Mullen (Raleigh) and this helped establish the fundamentals for the forthcoming season.

Although racing commenced as early as February, the first of the major events was the Inter-Services ten and 25-mile Time Trial champs in April – an event in which the Navy has dominated at both individual and team for the past six seasons.

The Navy were this year's host and the events were organised by C/Sgt Stuart Edwards (Raleigh) in conjunction with Tom Cox (Northover Velo Team) on the A303 near Yeovilton. A good turn out from all three services ensured some very competitive racing in tough and windy conditions which had an adverse affect on the times.

On the Saturday, Neptune's WO1 Sean Childs (*pictured*) kept the RN flag flying by taking his ninth ten-mile title in 21m 3s, from Sgt Cannon (RAF) in 21m 24s and S/Sgt Ridler a further second back in third with 21m 25s.

The team event was very close between all three services, and although WO1 Garry Drew (Raleigh/Drake) and CPO Andy Phipps (MASU Nelson) both put in strong performances, the Army took the title and thus ended the Navy's hold of consecutive team titles.

The following morning it was the turn of the 25 mile championship; again Childs took the honours with his seventh consecutive title in 54m 57s, with Army riders Ridler and Capt Walker in second and third spots with 56m 24s and 56m 31s. The Army again took the team honours, with our other best performances coming from Drew and Edwards.

The weekend also included the Navy championships; Childs took the ten-mile title from Simon Edney (associate member) in 22m with Drew in third in 22m 19s. Again Childs won the 25, with Edney in second in 56m 51s and Drew in 3rd with 57m 58s.

The RN are known to compete at the highest standard and the first of the Nationals took place in Teesside with the ten-mile champs in May.

This event featured current tour

professional Bradley Wiggins (Sky Pro Cycling); he took the honours in the men's event with Simon Edney finishing 67th in 22m 58s. Sally Edney (associate member) was 43rd in the ladies with 28m 53s, and Harry Edney (another associate member) 25th in the juniors with 24m 29s.

The National 25-mile was held in North Devon in June over a very tough and undulating course that featured eight RN riders. Defending champion and Commonwealth athlete Michael Hutchinson retained his men's title, Childs was 18th in 57m 15s, Sanderson and Simon Edney both joint 51st in 1h 56s, PO Lewis Antniuy (Culdrose) 106th, Bob Richards (Raleigh associate member) 107th and Mark Cutting (associate member) 121st.

The team finished fourth. Sally Edney was 49th in the ladies and Harry Edney 17th in the juniors. Remaining in June, the National 50 mile was held near London where Simon Edney's 1h 59m 13s put him at 50th in the men's event with Sally Edney finishing 25th in 2h 22m 56s in the ladies.

Heading into July for the National 24-hour champs, the omens looked good for the Navy as the current team champions having won it twice before in 2009 and 2010.

The event, held near the South Downs, featured a tough course with climbs in hot conditions. The early signs looked good for the RN team which featured five riders: Childs, Edwards, Richards, Lt Jason Sawyer (Culdrose) and new man to the distance CPO Barrie Whitehead (Heron).

Childs – runner-up in 2009 – was lying third at the 100-mile point and the remainder of the team were looking comfortable, except Richards who had to call it a day.

As night time and temperatures fell, both took their toll and by the next morning riders were struggling, particularly Childs who eventually finished fifth with 462.72 miles (that's the equivalent of London to Dundee), somewhat down on his target, but managing to win the National Veteran 40-44 category.

Edwards on the other hand was consistent throughout and finished strongly in ninth with 446.92 miles. Rookie Whitehead had a very impressive 407.48 miles to his credit in 22nd and multi-endurance athlete Sawyer 39th with 381.26 miles. The Navy finished 2nd overall in the team event losing their title to a strong GS Stella team.

The ride of the day though belonged to current record holder Andy Wilkinson (Port Sunlight Wheelers) after a 15-year absence,



smashing the record with a magnificent 541.17 miles.

Like many, he was helped from his bike at the end. The National 12 hr was held near Cheshire in August with four riders present. Unfortunately Richards had to call it a day early into his ride and Childs had to withdraw at the half way stage, both with injuries. Of the two remaining riders Whitehead achieved a personal best with 233.73 miles in 39th and Jerry Bromyard was 46th with 227.45 miles.

Elsewhere Childs claimed his fifth Welsh title in July by winning the Welsh CA 100 mile championships in 3h 45m 35s. Edwards was 20th in 4h 9m 30s and Bromyard 39th in 4h 27m 36s.

In the Welsh 12-hour champs, where the Navy has reigned supreme for many years, current champion Drew suffered badly in the heat to finish third in 258.89 miles and Edwards 12th with 242.88 miles.

The Navy 50-mile champs took place near Bodmin with Childs claiming victory in 1h 48m 13s, from Drew in 1hr 54m 13s and Lt Cdr Lee Sanderson SCC (Raleigh) third with 1h 57m.

The event also features the South West District Champs, with the Navy taking both individual and team honours.

The Navy Cup Team Time Trial was organised by PO Stewart Cox at RNAS Merryfield in September, attracting 25 teams from various units. The winning team were the guest riders Simon

Berogna and ex-RN rider Aran Stanton (both VC St Raphael). The fastest Navy duo were the composite team of Cdr David Hall (MoD Abbey Wood) and WO1 Chris Vellacott and the Inter-Unit Team Champions were the Raleigh team of Sanderson and LPT Chris Peden.

Other successes included the RN team of Simon Edney, Sanderson and Harry Edney winning the South-West Best All Rounder competition based on fastest times achieved over 10, 25 and 50 miles, with Simon third in the individual men and Harry first in the Juniors. Sally Edney also finished sixth overall in the ladies competition.

The team of Childs, Drew and Vellacott also won the Combined Services Best All-Rounder competition and Childs maintained his grasp on the RN Points and RNBAR titles.

A special mention must go to Richards and Cox who set Navy Club Tandem records at 10, 25, 50 and 100 miles, and 12-hour and 24-hour, a remarkable achievement which also included them becoming Welsh 100-mile and 12-hour champions, and Mersey RC 24-hour winners.

The RN Road Race Champs were organised by POPT Mark Smith (Raleigh), attracting around 50 riders.

The open race, aimed at the more experienced riders, saw WO1 JJ Smith (Drake) break clear, with Simon Edney chasing him down.

Once together, these two formed an alliance and pulled

a large gap on the remainder of the field. Approaching the finish, JJ Smith's experience was pivotal as he sprinted to the line to take victory and retain his title from Edney.

The novice race was extremely well supported, and the majority of the pack stuck together for the duration of the race until the very last corner, where CPO Shepherd (Heron) managed to break away and surge forward for a victorious win leaving behind a crazed ambush for the remaining places.

The Inter-Service Road Champs was organised by LPT Peden at Thorney Island Barracks, Emsworth.

The Navy were up against it at the start as they were without a number of their strong riders. Nevertheless, those in attendance still gave a good account of themselves and tried valiantly to make their mark with various tactics.

Unfortunately with many punctures, the team found themselves down on riders at the end and, when a breakaway group got clear towards the end, JJ Smith found himself to be the lone Navy rider amongst five soldiers; as a result the odds were stacked against him and eventually he took fourth in a race won by Walker (Army), who also won the team title.

The off-road Navy mountain bikers have had a mixed season; although lean in numbers they have had their successes.

The sport is split into three sections: X-Country, Enduro and

Downhill.

In the X-Country category, Sgt Ollie Yates (CTCRM/40 Cdo RM) finished 12th in the Nationals and third in the Region on the Sport category, and if it were not for unavailability, then PO Rob Smith (Vivid) would also be higher in the national rankings.

The Navy's No.1 mountain biker, Surg Lt Cdr (D) Al Lovell (Drake), has had an excellent year, finishing seventh in the British Masters; he's currently sixth in the points rankings.

In September the RNRMC in conjunction with Shred Racing hosted the Inter-Service championships in Devon on a mammoth course which tested even the most accomplished rider.

The final descent was just short of a mile of pure downhill and completing the four laps meant climbing 1,700 metres.

When the dust had settled and the casualties transported to hospital, the RAF came out on top grabbing the top and third step on the podium with Lovell splitting them in second.

A special mention should also go to Lt Cdr Bingham (Excellent/Sutherland) and LET Bagwell (Temeraire); residing in Hampshire they weren't used to the pure climbing of the Westo's, but put in gutsy performances.

The grit award should be handed to CPO Slinger Woods (Drake) who not only earned himself a free trip in an ambulance but also managed to make his own way from the top of the mountain to the first aid tent with a dislocated shoulder and broken elbow.

There were even better results from the Enduro section. This season the Navy was represented at both 12 and 24-hour events.

Rob Smith rode a 12-hour solo at both the European Champs and Twentyfour12, which also featured a strong contingent of RN riders.

PO Teasdale (Daring) also rode solo to complete both the Bristol 12-hour and the Mountain Mayhem 24-hour.

Lt Edmondson (MoD London) rode pairs at the Torq 12:12 and rounded off his returning season soloing at the Dawn Till Dusk, finishing an extremely credible seventh place.

The RN also fielded two mixed relay teams at the Mountain Mayhem 24-hour, and although last-minute operational changes they were forced to field non-serving members, it was still a big achievement as both teams finished in the top ten.

A special mention should be made of both Culdrose and Triumph who also entered 12-hour and 24-hour events with stand-alone teams.

Jinkin' Jenkin leads RN to win

Continued from page 48

Manager BJ Petty and coach Lemon took the opportunity to rein back the RN team a bit. After all there were still 60 minutes of RN participation left in the competition. It looked as if the Navy's instructions were "more of the same but more controlled. You can bet they are going to come at us so let us absorb it all and hit them on the break."

The Navy boys kept it quiet all right. Several Army attacks were spoiled, Potter and Brokenshire breaking up attack after attack.

Several Army corners culminated in the Army's Roscoe Wendover deflecting a shot past Bishop's outstretched foot for 5-1.

End-to-end stuff ensued, the Navy trying hard not to be sucked in to the Army's 'franticity'. Hooker denied Jenkin by tripping him. The short corner was saved low right. A Bishop save top D was crucial. Hooker tripped Jenkin again and got a green warning card. A still-shaken up Jenkin took the corner when he shouldn't – and missed! Milton resorted to the tried-and-tested scoring

procedure, sortied along the right board and picked out Edwards to score his hat-trick. The unsung hero will be so pleased to have scored three goals in a match such as this.

Jenkin's pressure on the physical Hooker elicited another Navy corner and he obligingly roofed it for his hat-trick and a 7-1 lead.

Since joining the Service 18 months ago Jenkin has taken Navy hockey by storm; a former National League player with Doncaster, he now plays his club hockey with National League Fareham. RN hockey buffs drool at the prospect of the missing Woody McInally and Afghanistan-based Mark Stanton one day teaming up with the very special Jenkin in wearing the Navy shirt.

Back to the hockey... The soldiers won a corner and big signaller Tim Tyler put it away for 7-2.

A Potter shot hit Tyler on the Army goal line. Penalty stroke not awarded as umpire Notman blew for it – then changed his mind.

It was soon forgotten as a delighted Trevethan got his name

on the scoresheet. Truly, this was a match to tell your kids about.

The industrious Wendover made it 8-3 and, thus encouraged, the soldiers threw everything at the Navy with 90 seconds remaining – without success.

More than two hours later the Army had recovered enough to beat a capable RAF team 8-5.

Two and a bit hours later it was time for the final match of the three as the airmen and Senior Service faced each other, with Lt Richard Smith taking over from Bishop in the Navy goal.

After a missed RN corner, Brokenshire passed from left midfield to LMEM Danny Makaruk (Illustrious) to open the Navy account.

Welsh International Danny has been – and still is – a wonderful servant of Navy Hockey and very proud to be the third killick stoker ever to have captained the Navy side in Inter-Service matches.

With four minutes gone, Jenkin shot and missed left. Two minutes later Smith made the first of several great saves. Within two minutes Jenkin had passed to the

red destroyer – aka Brokenshire – to score for a 2-0 RN lead.

The RAF got a corner for a slap of the ball from Dalton and the Air Force's Ricky Corbett roofed it to pull one back.

Umpire Jarvis awarded a Navy corner, umpire Higgins over ruled him. The RAF went down the other end and Dan Wallis put it away to level.

Brokenshire was unfortunate to connect with a bit of debris on the pitch and 'got a bobble' when about to score. Mark Dixon would have liked to have got the next goal from a general mêlée around the RAF net only for his goal-bound effort to be deflected in by Makaruk for a 3-2 half-time lead for the RN.

One confesses to a certain unease at the fragility of the half-time score.

One sensed that if the RAF were to get the next goal, the RN might be in trouble.

That the RAF thought so too was illustrated by their positive attacks in waves for the first four minutes of the second period.

One RAF corner was stopped

on the line, another was cleared then an RAF open-play shot narrowly missed the right post.

Things looked up a bit when the evergreen Makaruk won a very-satisfying corner against old adversary Rob Machin.

The first corner led to the award of a second and then a third when Jenkin was stick tackled. Jenkin missed it!

The RN watchers were checking their timepieces, a bit worried that the RAF might get to 3-3.

But they did not. With 14 minutes left Jenkin had his stick whacked when about to shoot. Needless to say it was a relieved Navy that now led 4-2 from Jenkin's penalty conversion.

RAF heads dropped briefly – make no mistake, going 4-2 down hit them hard.

They were hit even harder when (thank heavens!) Brokenshire scored from open play for 5-2.

It's interesting how well you can play when you are three goals up.

With 11 minutes left Jenkin got his second of the match from a corner for 6-2. Three minutes later that became 7-2 thanks to Dalton.

The RAF girded their loins for not one but several last efforts. Four corners in four minutes came to nought.

Smith was doing his bit keeping the light blue waves at bay.

Makaruk slammed a corner on to a post. Potter got a green card and a corner against. That led to three more in quick succession – but still the brave Smith and his defence kept them out.

On the face of it, 7-2 sounds like a bit of a drubbing; the RAF were unable to score against well-drilled RN defences but this was a game when the RAF were always 'in it', despite the eventual five-goal difference.

Rugby in the sun

THE RAF Akrotiri International Festival of Rugby ten-a-side is looking for RN participation from male and female teams.

The contest will take place at the Cyprus airbase from June 4-8.

Details from Steve Williams at theoldgoat@ntlworld.com or Lisa Keetley lj975@hotmail.com.

Greg's 7s heaven

ROYAL Marine Greg Barden says he wants more titles after leading England to rugby tournament victory.

The 30-year-old – pictured right, courtesy of the RFU, riding an Argentinian challenge – captained the national team to success in the Dubai **Rugby 7s** tournament.

England beat France 29-12 in the emirate to retain the trophy they won in 2010.

Barden, who's served for 14 years in the Royal Marines, said: "We were really pleased to win the tournament in an environment that is like a home from home for us – there are so many ex-pats in Dubai offering fantastic support."

Tries by Isoa Damu and Dan Norton gave England an early 12-0 lead. France hit back through Renaud Delmas but two tries by Player of the Tournament Matt Turner put England 24-7 ahead at half time. They held their lead and now move on in overall second place to the third of a nine-tournament World Series.

Greg, who previously played professional rugby union for Bristol and Newbury, said: "As a captain I see my role as bringing a no-blame culture to the team where we can focus on getting the basics right."

"I draw upon my military experience to convey to the guys that it's about making calm decisions under pressure. We wanted to play with a game plan and that's what we achieved."

Greg, who converted from centre to flanker, was made England captain on November 22. He has used his Royal Marine training in his new role.

He said: "I see a large element of crossover between the naval world and the sporting environment. It's about taking responsibility but crucially it's about trusting teammates to take their own responsibility too."

"As captain I take on things individually which can be distractions to the players, with the view that we can then improve as a group. The training in both worlds is about honesty; without that it's very difficult to move forward."

Barden played 15 times for the Royal Navy rugby union side and twice for the Combined Services team.

Lt Cdr Geraint Ashton Jones, as former director of Royal Navy Rugby Union, watched his progress.

He said: "I've known Greg throughout his rugby career and he has obvious leadership qualities."

"He has been part of the Elite Sportsman Scheme and when he was offered a central contract to play rugby for England he decided to leave the military to do that full time."

"His leadership style is a balanced mix of leading from the front with a very committed intense way of playing the game and the ability to speak forthrightly behind the scenes."

"As a player he is physical, and as you would expect from someone with his professional background he doesn't understand the idea of a backward step."



Jinkin' Jenkin leads RN to win

THE RN senior men lifted the Inter-Services **indoor hockey** title after two goal-fuelled encounters with their rivals.

The Army were the first to face the RN goal machine, *writes Lt Cdr Alan Walker.*

Two RN short corners in the first two minutes set the tone for the match, although neither was converted.

Then Lee Milton stole the ball to break up an Army attack, drove down the right board and crossed for Surg Lt Dave Potter – breaking from midfield – to meet it first time and net past Dan Cattermole in the soldiers' goal.

Milton repeated his foray right but the third Navy corner thus earned was spoiled by a poor injection. Three Army and three Navy attacks followed in quick succession, but all were snuffed out.

With five minutes on the clock, an Army defender's mistake gave the RN short corner No.4. A left-slip routine and shot hit a defender's foot on the goal line. The huge Cattermole saved from S/Lt Richard Jenkin.

Another attack each, then the Army's first corner was well charged down by the onrushing Jon Bishop in the RN goal. That prompted another Navy attack, culminating in a shot and a miss.

Seven minutes gone now, another Milton drive down the right crossed for Army back Jon Hooker to miscontrol. Navy pressure produced the fifth short corner. Rowan Edwards injected Lee Milton, who thundered his shot against the bar.

Army attack, RN attack, Milton was away down the right again, picked out Jenkin. There was a bit of trademark 'jinking', another short corner and Jenkin put it in the roof for a 2-0 Navy lead.

Mne Luke Dalton came on and immediately emulated Milton



● S/Lt Richard Jenkin (HMS Temeraire) heads for the Army goal during the drubbing of the soldiers

Picture: Lt Col Charles Jackman, Fulwood Barracks, Preston

down the right. Navy attacks were giving the soldiers' defence a torrid time. Dalton's cross was met first time by Edwards – and 'Dancat' in the Army goal did not even sniff it. 3-0

Forty-five seconds later, Dalton and Edwards repeated the venture. 4-0

Army attack, RN attack. Navy coach Steve Lemon called 'time out' with 12 minutes gone. Everyone in the packed arena knew they had probably been watching the most complete destruction of an Army indoor team.

The fat lady was not yet singing but there was a certain delighted main sponsor who found it hard to conceal his pleasure at this performance.

Three determined Army attacks,

two Jon Bishop saves heralded the resumption of play, a third attack forced the Army's second short corner. Sadly the Army could not do anything right just now.

The play went straight to the Army's circle, where the wretched 'Dancat' caught wondering whether to remain upright or go to ground actually saved – as if in prayer – on his knees.

This led to the award of Navy's short corner No.7. Captain Matt Brokenshire had been intercepting and breaking down attacks all match – but uncharacteristically he managed to make a mess of the corner.

RN then Army attack, an Army shot and miss. Jon Bishop saved from the dangerous still-under-23 Army junior star Sean Vincent, it

looked as if he had had to wait for all the bugginses to have their turn before he got on. He did not get much court time – which probably suited the RN.

The Army's third corner led to their fourth, both snuffed out. A Navy attack produced shots from Sean Trevethan and Dalton; the latter's shot rebounded off 'Dancat's pads to Jenkin for number five.

After the Army had wasted their fifth and sixth short corners, Jenkin found himself able to run to and fro across the front of the Army circle. A long hard pass from Adam Duke was deflected first time by Jenkin; it flew just over the Army crossbar so the half-time score stayed at 5-0.

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Matt again the master

THERE was a record attendance at this year's RN **squash** championships at Temeraire with over 50 players taking part.

Good turn-outs were seen in all categories and particularly in the Veterans event where the minimum qualifying age has been reduced to 35, *writes Lt Cdr David Cooke.*

In the main event, the men's open, there were 30 competitors, including last year's winner Lt Matt Ellicott (FOST) but his likely main rival Mne Nick Jezeph (RM Poole) was unavailable for operational reasons.

The audience were fortunate enough to witness a superb display of squash in all areas. During the course of the competition Matt Ellicott looked to be a strong contender until he suffered a groin strain in the doubles competition.

Gritting his teeth, he faced an in-form AET Steven Wallace (Culdrose), who had also cruised through the earlier rounds without dropping a game.

The final was entertaining with some very punishing rallies, however Wallace, perhaps playing the tighter squash at times, made too many unforced errors, which helped Ellicott to win 3-0 and retain his title.

In the Plate competition final, PO Dave Armstrong (Culdrose) beat Cdr Steve Mardlin (NBC Portsmouth).

Earlier in the day, Wallace beat Mne Patrick McHugh (40 Cdo) in the U25 final, a category which was also well supported including some new faces showing much promise for the future.

The ladies event also had good numbers with familiar and not-so-familiar faces as a number of newcomers emerged this year. Nevertheless, Lt Danielle Hancock (HMS Dragon) comfortably retained her title for the second time.

The doubles competition, always providing hustle and bustle, proved to be an entertaining affair and was enjoyed by all players and spectators alike.

Defending champions Ellicott and Armstrong were paired together again, however the duo of Cdr Steve Shaw (Chairman RNSRA) and Lt Cdr Robin Young, long time stalwart of Navy squash and winner of many trophies and titles, could not be discounted.

The above two pairs did emerge as finalists and provided an entertaining match, with last year's winners "nicking it" at the end of the second game.

For the first time in many years Robin Young did not feature in the veterans final. With the age group now starting at 35, it allowed the younger element to take the honours this year. Out of a field of 23, Lt James Roue (JHC HQ) and CPOPT Jason Wallace (BRNC) made it to the final.

In a pulsating and energy-sapping five-game match, both men chased and retrieved almost everything and at the end of a gruelling 45 minutes, Roue managed to defeat the man from Dartmouth.

In the veterans' plate final, Dave Milford beat WO Charlie Mathews (FOST) in straight games.

On the Saturday, a racketball taster session was carried out for those who had energy remaining in their batteries, and this proved to be very popular.

It is intended to hold a Racketball competition at Temeraire in February or March; further details will be advertised in the New Year.

On completion of play, Cdr Shaw thanked all competitors for such a record turn out and congratulated everyone for their commitment, fitness and for the standard of squash on show over a highly dynamic weekend.

The President of the RNSRA, Cdre David Langbridge then presented trophies and prizes to all winners and runners up and wished all players taking part in the impending Inter-Service Championships at Aldershot the very best of luck.

